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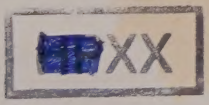
THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

LONDON TO YORK



RESERVE STOCK

HISTORIES OF THE ROADS

— BY —

CHARLES G. HARPER.

THE BRIGHTON ROAD: The Classic Highway to the South.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD: London to York.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD: York to Edinburgh.

THE DOVER ROAD: Annals of an Ancient Turnpike.

THE BATH ROAD: History, Fashion and Frivolity on an old Highway.

THE MANCHESTER AND GLASGOW ROAD: London to Manchester.

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THE HOLYHEAD ROAD: Birmingham to Holyhead.

THE HASTINGS ROAD: And The "Happy Springs of Tunbridge."

THE OXFORD, GLOUCESTER AND MILFORD HAVEN ROAD: London to Gloucester.

THE OXFORD, GLOUCESTER AND MILFORD HAVEN ROAD: Gloucester to Milford Haven.

THE NORWICH ROAD An East Anglian Highway.

THE NEWMARKET, BURY, THETFORD AND CROMER ROAD.

THE EXETER ROAD: The West of England Highway.

THE PORTSMOUTH ROAD

THE CAMBRIDGE, KING'S LYNN AND ELY ROAD.

The
GREAT NORTH ROAD

The Old Mail Road to Scotland

By CHARLES G. HARPER

LONDON TO YORK

Illustrated by the Author, and from old-time Prints and Pictures

RESERVE STOCK

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In Loving Memory
of
HERMAN MORONEY

"I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any fellow-creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Attributed to William Penn.

PREFACE

WHEN the original edition of the " GREAT NORTH ROAD *" was published in* 1901 *the motor-car was yet a new thing. It had, in November,* 1896, *been given by Act of Parliament the freedom of the roads; but, so far, the character of the nation's traffic had been comparatively little changed. People would still turn and gaze, interested, at a mechanically-propelled vehicle; and few were those folk who had journeyed the entire distance between London and Edinburgh in one of them. For motor-cars were still, really, in more or less of an experimental stage; and on any long journey you were never sure of finishing by car what you had begun. Also, the speed possible was not great enough to render such a long*

journey exhilarating to modern ideas. It is true that, the year before, the "Automobile Club of Great Britain and Ireland," not yet become the "Royal Automobile Club," had in its now forgotten rôle of a "Society of Encouragement" planned and carried out a "Thousand Miles Tour," which had Edinburgh as its most northern point; but it was a very special effort. Those who took part in it are not likely to forget the occasion.

To-day, all that is changed. Every summer, every autumn, sees large numbers of touring automobiles on the way to Scotland and the moors, filled with those who prefer the road, on such terms, to the railway. From being something in the nature of a lonely highway, the Great North Road has thus become a very much travelled one. In this way, some of its circumstances have changed remarkably, and old-time comfortable wayside inns that seemed to have been ruined for all time with the coming of railways and the passing of the coaches have wakened to a newer life. Chief among these is the "Bell" on Barnby Moor, just north of Retford. The story of its revival is a romance. Closed about 1845, *and converted into a farm-house, no one would have cared to predict its revival as an inn. But as such it was reopened, chiefly for the use of motorists, in* 1906, *and there it is to-day.*

But, apart from the tarred and asphalted condition of the actual roadway in these times, the route, all the way between London, York and Edinburgh, looks much the same as it did. Only, where perhaps one person might then know it thoroughly, from end to end, a hundred are well acquainted with the way and its features. It is for those many who now know the Great North Road that this new edition is prepared, giving the story of the long highway between the two capitals.

CHARLES G. HARPER.

April, 1922.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

LONDON TO YORK

London (General Post Office) to —	MILES
Islington (the "Angel")	1¼
Highgate Archway	4¼
East End, Finchley	5¾
Brown's Wells, Finchley Common ("Green Man")	7
Whetstone	9¼
Greenhill Cross	10¼
Barnet	11¼
Hadley Green	12
Ganwick Corner ("Duke of York")	13
Potter's Bar	14¼
Little Heath Lane	15¼
Bell Bar ("Swan")	17¼
Hatfield	19¾
Stanborough	21½
Lemsford Mills (cross River Lea)	22¼
Digswell Hill (cross River Mimram)	23¼
Welwyn	25¼
Woolmer Green	27¼
Broadwater	29½
Stevenage	31½
Graveley	33½
Baldock	37½
Biggleswade (cross River Ivel)	45¼

London (General Post Office) to—*continued.*	MILES
Lower Codicote	46¾
Beeston Cross (cross River Ivel)	48¼
Girtford	49¼
Tempsford (cross River Ouse)	51
Wyboston	54
Eaton Socon	55¼
Cross Hall	56¾
Diddington	60
Buckden	61½
Brampton Hut	63¾
Alconbury	66½
Alconbury Weston	67
Alconbury Hill (" Wheatsheaf ")	68
Sawtry St. Andrews	71½
Stilton	75½
Norman Cross	76
Kate's Cabin	79½
Water Newton	81¼
Sibson	82
Stibbington (cross River Nene)	83¾
Wansford	84
Stamford Baron (cross River Welland)	89
Stamford	89½
Great Casterton	91½
Stretton	96
Greetham (" New Inn ")	97½
North Witham (" Black Bull ")	100½
Colsterworth	102½
Great Ponton	106¾
Spitalgate Hill	109¾
Grantham	110¼
Great Gonerby	112

London (General Post Office) to—*continued.*	MILES
Foston	116
Long Bennington	118¼
Shire Bridge (cross Shire Dyke)	120½
Balderton (cross River Devon)	122¼
Newark (cross River Trent)	124½
South Muskham	127
North Muskham	128
Cromwell	130
Carlton-on-Trent	131½
Sutton-on-Trent	133
Weston	134¾
Scarthing Moor	135½
Tuxford	137¾
West Markham	139½
Markham Moor	140½
Gamston (cross Chesterfield Canal)	141½
Retford (cross River Idle)	145
Barnby Moor	148
Torworth	149½
Ranskill	150¼
Scrooby	152
Bawtry	153½
Rossington Bridge (cross River Torne)	157¾
Tophall	158¾
Doncaster (cross River Don)	162¼
Bentley	164
Owston	167¾
Askerne (cross River Went)	169¼
Whitley (cross Knottingley and Goole Canal)	174
Whitley Bridge	175
Chapel Haddlesey (cross River Aire)	175½
Burn (cross Selby Canal)	179¼

London (General Post Office) to—*continued.*	MILES
Brayton	180¾
Selby (cross River Ouse)	182¼
Barlby	183¾
Riccall	186
Escrick	189¼
Deighton	190½
Gate Fulford	195
York	196¾

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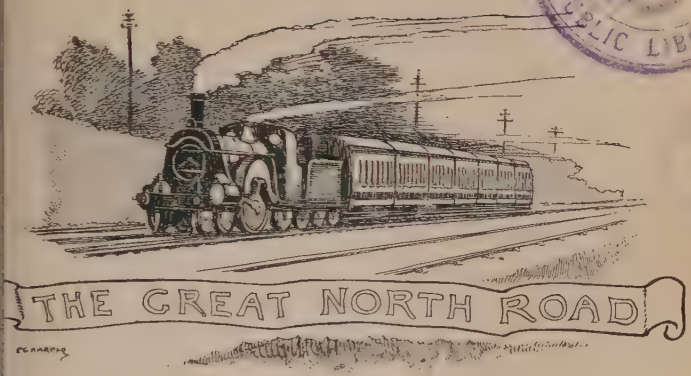


THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

I

THERE was once an American who, with cheap wit, expressed a fear of travelling in the little island of Great Britain, lest he should accidentally fall over the edge of so small a place. It is quite evident that he never travelled the road from London to York and Edinburgh.

You have to perform that journey to realise that this is, after all, not so very small an island. It is not enough to have been wafted between London and Edinburgh by express train—even although the wafting itself takes seven hours and a half—for one to gain a good idea of the distance. We will not take into consideration the total mileage between Dover and Cape Wrath, which tots up to the formidable figure of eight hundred miles or so, but will confine ourselves in these pages to the great road between London and Edinburgh: to the Great North Road, in fact, which measures, by way of York, three hundred and ninety-three miles.

There are a North Road and a Great North Road. Like different forms of religious belief, by which their several adherents all devoutly hope to win to that one place where we all would be, these two roads eventually lead to one goal, although they approach it by independent ways. The North Road is the oldest, based as it is partly on the old Roman Ermine Way which led to Lincoln. It is measured from Shoreditch Church, and goes by Kingsland to Tottenham and Enfield, and so by Waltham Cross to Cheshunt, Ware, and Royston, eventually meeting the Great North Road after passing through Caxton and climbing Alconbury Hill, sixty-eight miles from London.

The Great North Road takes a very different route out of London. It was measured from Hicks's Hall, Smithfield, and, passing the "Angel" at Islington, pursued a straight and continually ascending course for Holloway and Highgate, going thence to Barnet, Hatfield, Welwyn, Stevenage, Biggleswade, and Buckden to Alconbury; where, as just remarked, the North Road merged into it. From London to Hadley Green, just beyond Barnet, the Great North Road and the Holyhead Road are identical.

In these volumes we shall consistently keep to the Great North Road; starting, however, as the record-making cyclists of late years have done, from the General Post-office in St. Martin's-le-Grand, to or from which, or the neighbouring old inns, the coaches of the historic past came and went.

We travel with a light heart: our forbears with dismal forebodings, leaving duly-executed and attested wills behind them. In the comparatively settled times of from a hundred to two hundred years ago, they duly returned, after many days: in earlier periods the home-coming was not so sure a thing.

These considerations serve to explain to the tourist and the cyclist, who travel for the love of change and the desire for beautiful scenery, why no one in the Middle Ages travelled from choice. From the highest to the lowest, from the king in his palace to

the peasant in his wattled hut, every one who could do so stayed at home, and only faced the roads from sheer necessity. No one appreciated scenery in those days; nor are our ancestors to be blamed for their shortcomings in this respect, for outside every man's door lurked some danger or another, and when a man's own fireside is the only safe place he knows of, it is apt to appear to him the most beautiful and the most desirable of spots.

We cannot say whether the Romans appreciated scenery. If a love of the wildly beautiful in nature is dependent upon the safety of those who behold it, and upon the ease with which those scenes are visited, perhaps only the later generations of Roman colonists could have possessed this sense. The earlier Romans who made their splendid system of roads were, doubtless, only military men, and, well aware of their dangers, found nothing beautiful in mountain ranges. Their successors, however, during four hundred years had leisure and plentiful opportunities of cultivating taste, and travel was highly organised among them. A milliare, or milestone, was placed at every Roman mile—4854 English feet—and "mansiones," or posting-stations, at distances varying from seven to twenty miles.

Roman roads were scientifically constructed. The following was the formula:—

I. Pavimentum, or foundation. Fine earth, hard beaten in.
II. Statumen, or bed of the road. Composed of large stones, sometimes mixed with mortar.
III. Ruderatio. Small stones, well mixed with mortar.
IV. Nucleus. Formed by mixing lime, chalk, pounded brick, or tile; or gravel, sand, and lime mixed with clay.
V. Summum Dorsum. Surface of the paved road.

So thoroughly well was the work done that remains of these roads are even now discovered, in a perfect

condition, although buried from six to fifteen feet, or even deeper, beneath the present surface of the land, owing to the hundreds of years of neglect which followed the abandonment of Britain, and the decay of Roman civilisation; a neglect which allowed storms and the gradual effects of the weather to accumulate deposits of earth upon these paved ways until they were made to disappear as effectually as Pompeii and Herculaneum under the hail of ashes and lava that hid those cities from view for eighteen hundred years.

When that great people, the Romans, perished off the face of the earth, and none succeeded them, their roads began to decay, their bridges and paved fords were broken down or carried away by floods, and the rulers of the nation were for over five hundred years too busily engaged in subduing rebellions at home or in prosecuting wars abroad to attend to the keeping of communications in proper repair. Social disorder, too, destroyed roads and bridges that had survived natural decay and the stress of the elements. Even those roads which existed in otherwise good condition were only fair-weather highways. They were innocent of culverts, and consequently the storm-water, which nowadays is carried off beneath them, swept across the surface, and either carried it away or remained in vast lakes on whose shores wayfarers shivered until the floods had abated. Thieves and murderers were the commonplaces of the roads, and signposts were not; so that guides—who at the best were expensive, and at the worst were the accomplices of cutthroats, and lured the traveller to their haunts—were absolutely necessary.

To the relief of travellers in those times came the Church, for the civil and secular power had not begun even to dream of road-making. The Church did some very important things for travellers, praying for them, and adjuring the devout to include them in their prayers for prisoners and captives, the sick, and others in any way distressed. The very word "travel"

derives from *travail*, meaning labour or hardship. This alone shows how much to be pitied were those whose business took them from their own firesides.

But to pray for them alone would not perhaps have been so very admirable, and so the Church took the care of the roads on itself in a very special sense. It granted indulgences to those who by their gifts or their bodily labour helped to repair the highways, and licensed hermits to receive tolls and alms from travellers over roads and bridges constructed by the brethren, those revenues going towards the upkeep of the ways. Benefactors to the Church frequently left lands and houses, whose proceeds were to be applied for the same purpose ; and for many years this trust was respected, and all the road and bridge building and repairing was done by the religious. By degrees, however, this trust was, if not betrayed, allowed to gradually fall into neglect. False hermits set up in remote places, away from the eyes of the bishops, and living idle and dissolute lives on the alms they received, allowed roads and bridges alike to fall into decay. These vicious, unlicensed hermits were great stumbling-blocks to the godly in those times. They were often peasants or workmen, who had observed how fat and idle a living was that gained by those among the licensed who had betrayed their trust and fared sumptuously on alms unearned, and so went and set up in the eremitical profession for themselves. They fared well on bacon, had "fat chekus," toasted themselves before roaring fires in their too comfortable cells, and lived "in ydelnesse and ese," frequenting ale-houses and even worse places. Accordingly many of them were eventually removed, or suffered various punishments, and the neighbouring monasteries placed others in their stead.

By this time, however, the bishops and abbots, whose broad acres had often come to them in trust for the welfare of the traveller, began to forget their obligations. It was, of course, a natural process : the possessions of the religious houses had grown

enormously, but so also had their hospitality to all and sundry. Travellers had increased, and as it was a rule of conduct with the great abbeys to not only relieve the poor, but also to entertain the great in those days before the rise of the roadside hostelry, their resources must have been well exercised. Meanwhile the statutes of the country had gradually been imposing the care of the roads upon the laity, and at the time when the greater and lesser monasteries were dissolved, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, parishes and landowners were chiefly concerned in endeavouring to comply with their new and strange obligations in keeping their ways passable. Of course they did not succeed, and equally of course, because it was impossible that they could, the pains and penalties threatened for foul and dangerous roads were not enforced.

A curious pamphlet on the condition of the roads in the seventeenth century is that written by Thomas Mace, one of the "clerks" of Trinity College, Cambridge, and published in 1675. Mace, there is no doubt, was a man born out of his time. Had circumstances been propitious, he might have become another and an earlier Macadam. His pamphlet, written both in prose and verse, and addressed to the king, is styled *The Profit, Conveniency, and Pleasure for the Whole Nation*, and is "a Discourse lately presented to His Majesty concerning the Highways of England; their badness, the causes thereof, the reasons of these causes, the impossibility of ever having them well mended according to the old way of mending; but may most certainly be done, and for ever so maintained (according to this New Way) substantially, and with very much ease."

We find here, as in other publications until the mid-eighteenth century was well past, that the country was for the most part unenclosed, so that when the traffic had worn the old tracks into deep ruts, or when mud had rendered them impassable, the wagons, carts, and laden horses were taken round by the nearest firm spots. "Much ground," says our

author, "is now spoiled and trampled down in all wide roads, where coaches and carts take liberty to pick and chuse for their best advantages; besides, such sprawling and straggling of coaches and carts utterly confound the road in all wide places, so that it is not only unpleasurable, but extremely perplexing and cumbersome both to themselves and to all horse travellers."

These pickings and choosings were the original cause of the still existing twists and turns in many of our roads. When we see an old road winding snake-like through a flat country, with no hills or other obvious reasons for its circuitous course, we may, in most cases, safely attribute this apparent indecision and infirmity of purpose to these ancient difficulties, thus perpetuated.

This ancient state of things occasioned many disputes and even fatal affrays between the pack-horse men, who carried goods slung across their horses' backs from one part of the country to the other, and between the market-folk and those who travelled on horseback and coaches. Mace would himself seem to have experienced some of these contentions as to who should take the clean and who the muddy part of the road, for he writes with great bitterness about "these disturbances, daily committed by uncivil, refractory, and rude, Russianlike rake-shames, in contesting for the way."

"Hundreds of pack-horses," he continues, "panniers, whifflers, coaches, wagons, wains, carts, or whatsoever others," fought and schemed for precedence; and a horseman, his horse already exhausted by a long and tedious journey, might, at the entrance to a town, especially on market day, be compelled to go out of his way twenty times in one mile, owing to the peevishness of these whifflers and market-folk. "I have often known many travellers," he continues, "and myself very often, to have been necessitated to stand stock still behind a standing cart or wagon, on most beastly and unsufferable wet wayes, to the great

endangering of our horses and neglect of public business: nor durst we adventure to stirr (for most imminent danger of those deep rutts and unreasonable ridges) till it has pleased Mr. Carter to jog on, which we have taken very kindly."

His plan was to once get the roads in good repair, and then, he says, with the employment of "day men" to every five miles or so, they could be easily kept in order. The prospect induces him to rise to poetry:

> "First, let the ways be regularly brought
> To artificial form, and truly wrought;
> So that we can suppose them firmly mended,
> And in all needful points, the work well ended,
> That not a stone's amiss; but all complete,
> All lying smooth, round, firm, and wondrous neat."

So far good. But then comes the heavy traffic to destroy the good work:

> "Then comes a gang of heavy-laden wains
> Of carts and wagons, spoiling all our pains."

But he is ready for this. His proposed "day men" by at once filling up the ruts would make the damage good. All these things he commends to the notice of his Majesty with the concluding lines:

> "There's only one thing yet worth thinking on,
> Which is, to put this work in execution."

That it was *not* "put into execution" is a matter of history.

We have seen that Mace calls the road to Scotland a "highway," and the terms "highroad" or "highway" are common enough; but what really *is* a highroad? or rather, how did the term originate? Such a road is usually understood to be a main artery of traffic between important towns, but that was not precisely the original meaning, which indicated the physical character of the road rather than its geographical status. "High roads" were originally in fact, causeways constructed across, and above the level of, marshes and low-lying lands, and the term

was therefore excellently descriptive. The changed meaning no doubt arose from the fact that, as it would scarcely ever have been worth while to build embanked roads for the purpose of connecting obscure villages out of the way of trade, consequently the "high ways" and the "high roads" only came into existence between important centres. But this highly specialised meaning was destroyed when Turnpike Acts and Highway Acts began to be passed. The first Turnpike Act, one relating to the road to the North, referred to the Shoreditch, Stamford Hill, Ware, and Royston route, which joined the Great North Road at Alconbury Hill. It was passed in 1663, and authorised a toll-gate at Stilton, among other places. In the preamble to this Act we find the road spoken of as "the ancient highway and post-road leading from London to York and so into Scotland." Later Acts providing for the collection of tolls on the main roads and for the formation of Turnpike Trusts, whose business it was to collect those tolls and with them keep the "turnpike" roads in repair, named them "turnpike roads"; while other legislation, culminating in the General Highway Act of William the Fourth, perpetrated a delightful paradox by especially designating by-roads "highways." The cardinal difference, in the eyes of the law, was that a turnpike road was a main line of communication, to be maintained in proper order throughout its length by taxes collected from the users of the road; while highways were only local roads for local use and to be maintained by the respective parishes in which they were situated. The ways in which these parish roads were kept in repair were sufficiently curious. "Statute labour" preceded highway rates, and was so called from a statute of Philip and Mary providing for parish road-surveyors, and for men, horses, carts, and materials to be supplied by the farmers at their orders, for repairs. "Statute labour" survived in a fashion until the passing of the General Highway Act of 1835, when it was wholly superseded by rates. In later days parishes united

and formed Highway Boards, just as they formed Poor Law Unions; and choosing a surveyor, levied a common highway rate. These surveyors were not always, nor often, competent men. They were, in fact, generally elected by the Boards or the Vestries from some necessitous inhabitants little above the status of the broken-down old men who were paid a trifle to break or spread stones in order to keep them from being burdens to the parish in the workhouse. These surveyors were appointed and work done in fear of the parishes being indicted and heavily fined for the dangerous condition of their roads, but it is obvious that they must have been very badly repaired in those times. Nowadays the roads are all highways, since the turnpikes have been abolished, and their repair, outside the boroughs, is the business of the County Councils.

II

Before Macadam and Telford appeared upon the scene, the office of road-surveyor was very generally looked down upon. No self-respecting engineer, before the time of these great men, condescended to have anything to do with roads. It is true that a forerunner of Macadam and Telford had appeared in Yorkshire in 1765, when "Blind Jack of Knaresborough" began the construction of the Boroughbridge and Harrogate road, the first of the long series for which he contracted; but he was not an official road-surveyor, nor by profession an engineer. He was, in fact, an engineer born and wholly untaught.

John Metcalf, the famous blind roadmaker, was born in 1717, and lost his eyesight at six years of age.

A native of Knaresborough, he filled in his time many parts; being fiddler, huckster, soldier, carrier, proprietor of the first stage-wagon between York and Knaresborough, and road and bridge maker and contractor by turns. The marvellous instinct which served him instead of sight is scarce credible, but is well authenticated. He joined Thornton's company of Yorkshire volunteers raised at Boroughbridge to meet the Scots rebels in the '45, and marched with them and played them into action at Falkirk. His marvellous adventures have no place here, but his solitary walk from London to Harrogate in 1741 concerns the Great North Road. Being in London, and returning at the same time, Colonel Liddell of Harrogate offered Blind Jack a seat behind his carriage, which Metcalf declined, saying that he could easily walk as far in a day as the colonel could go in his carriage with post-horses. This incidentally shows us how utterly vile the roads were at the time. Metcalf, although blind and unused to the road, having travelled up to London by sea, walked back, and easily reached Harrogate before the colonel, who posted all the way.

Liddell, who had an escort of sixteen mounted servants, started an hour later than Metcalf. It had been arranged that they should meet that night at Welwyn, but, a little beyond Barnet, on Hadley Green, where the roads divide, Metcalf took the left hand, or Holyhead, road by mistake and went a long distance before he discovered his mistake. Still he arrived at Welwyn first. The next day he was balked at Biggleswade by the river, which was in flood, and with no bridge to cross by. Fortunately, after wandering some distance along the banks, he met a stranger who led the way across a plank bridge. When they had crossed, Metcalf offered him some pence for a glass of beer, which his guide declined, saying he was welcome. Metcalf, however, pressed it upon him.

"Pray, can you see very well?" asked the stranger.

"Not very well," replied Blind Jack.

"God forbid I should tithe you," said his guide. "I am the rector of this parish; so God bless you, and I wish you a good journey."

In the end, Metcalf reached Harrogate two days before the colonel.

Metcalf made many roads around Knaresborough and in different parts of Yorkshire, but none actually on the Great North Road. He died, aged ninety-three, in 1810, five years before Macadam and Telford began their work upon the roads. Like them, he rather preferred boggy ground for road-making, and forestalled both them and Stephenson in adopting fagots as foundations over mires. At that time the ignorant surveyors of roads repaired them with dirt scraped from ditches and water-courses, in which they embedded the first cartloads of stones which came to hand; stone of all kinds and all sizes. This done, their "repairs" were completed, with the result that the roads were frequently as bad as ever and constantly in the most rugged condition. Roads—it may be news to the uninstructed—cannot be made with dirt. In fact, a good road through anything but rock is generally excavated, and the native earth being removed, its place is taken by coarse-broken granite or rock; this in its turn receiving a layer of "macadam," or smaller broken granite or whinstone, which is finally bound together by a sprinkling of red gravel, of the kind known by builders as "hoggin," whose binding qualities are caused by a slight natural admixture of clay. In his insistence upon broken stones, Macadam proved a power of observation not possessed by the generality of road-makers, whose method was the haphazard one of strewing any kind upon the road and trusting in the traffic to pack them. With rounded pebbles or gravel stones thus chafing against one another, they never packed into a solid mass, but remained for all time as unstable as a shingly beach. Generations of road-making had not taught wisdom, but Macadam perceived the readiness of the angularities in broken stones to unite and form a homogeneous

mass, and in introducing his system proved himself unwittingly a man of science, for science has in these later days discovered that ice is compacted by the action of ice-crystals uniting in exactly this manner.

A great scheme for laying out the whole of the Great North Road between London and Edinburgh on a scientific basis was in progress when the successful trial of the competing locomotives at Rainhill, near Liverpool, cast a warning shadow over the arrangements, and finally led to the project being entirely abandoned. Had the work been done, it is quite possible that the railways to the north would have taken another direction; that, in fact, instead of land having to be surveyed and purchased for them, the new, straight, and level road would have been given up to and largely used by the railways. Telford was the engineer chosen by the Government to execute this work, of which the portion between Morpeth and Edinburgh was actually constructed. The survey of the road between London, York, and Morpeth was begun as early as 1825, and had been not only completed, but the works on the eve of being started, when the Rainhill trials in 1829 stopped them short, and caused the utter waste of the public money spent in the surveying.

III

It were vain, nowadays, to seek any of the old starting-points from London. The late Mr. Frederick Locker-Lampson asked in 1896, "Are 'The Bull and Mouth,' 'The Spread Eagle,' 'The Swan with Two Necks,' and 'The Green Man and Still,' yet in existence?" With

some little research he would have discovered that—with the sole exception of the last-named—they are not. The "Bull and Mouth" in later years became the "Queen's Hotel," and was demolished only when the site was required for an extension of the General Post Office in 1887. At the same time as the "Queen's" disappeared, the street at the side of it, called from the old inn "Bull and Mouth Street," was stopped up. In this street was the entrance to the famous old coaching-stables which were in the last years of their existence used as a railway receiving-office for goods. On their being pulled down, the grotesque plaster sign, representing a giant face with yawning mouth in which stood a bull, was removed to the Guildhall Museum, where it may still be seen, together with the yet larger and more elaborate sign which decorated the frontage of the "Queen's." This also included a mouth and a bull, set amidst a frame of plaster fruits and flowers, with the inscription :—

"Milo the Cretonian,
An ox slew with his fist,
And ate it up at one meal,
Ye gods! what a glorious twist."

The origin, however, of the curious sign had nothing to do with this hungry person. Precisely what *was* that origin is never likely to be known; for although the legend that it derived from the capture of "Boulogne Mouth"—*i.e.* Boulogne Harbour—in the reign of Henry the Eighth is in general acceptation, it has been shrewdly suspected that this was a tale wickedly invented by George Steevens, a literary practical joker, who palmed off many similar stories upon unsuspecting antiquaries at the end of last century. A perhaps more likely story is that the sign was originally the "Bowl and Mouth."

Under Sherman's rule the "Bull and Mouth" became a mighty resort of coaches to and from all parts, but more especially the north, and his

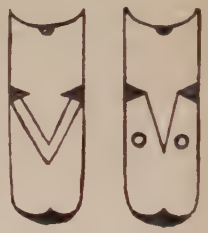
underground stables formed one of the sights of London.

Edward Sherman was a man of many parts, and had a varied career. Originally a stockbroker, he followed Willans at the "Bull and Mouth" in 1823, and rebuilt it as the "Queen's" in 1830, continuing the stables under the old name, and eventually reconstructing them. The money for these enterprises came from three old and wealthy ladies whom he married in succession. If the stranger, unversed in the build and colour of coaches, could not pick out the somewhat old-fashioned, bright-yellow vehicles as Sherman's, he was helped in identifying them by the pictorial sign of the inn painted on the panels—rather a startling one, by the way, to the rustics. Sherman, however, had not the prescience of Chaplin or of Horne, who clearly foresaw the success of railways, and he kept his coaches on the roads for some time after they were opened to their destinations. He was sufficiently ill-advised not to come to terms with the railway companies, and actually attempted, with the "Red Rover," to run the Manchester trains off. Of course this could not last very long, and Sherman withdrew after having lost seven thousand pounds in a gallant, but futile, competition with steam.

In its prime the "Bull and Mouth" sent forth the Edinburgh and Aberdeen Royal Mail by York; the Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen coach by Ferrybridge to Newcastle, where the Glasgow passengers changed; the Glasgow and Carlisle Royal Mail; the Newcastle "Wellington"; Shrewsbury and Holyhead "Union" and "Oxonian"; Birmingham "Old Post Coach" and "Aurora"; Leeds Royal Mail and "Express"; and Leicester "Union Post Coach."

The site of the "Swan with Two Necks" is now occupied by the London and North-Western and South-Western Joint Goods Depôt, in Gresham Street. Modern sculptured keystones may be seen over the

entrances, bearing the effigy of a double-headed swan. This sign, like that of the "Bull and Mouth," is a corruption of a widely different term; originally, indeed, the "Swan with Two Nicks," from the particular "nicks" with which the bills of the swans belonging to the Vintners' Company on the Thames were marked. The City Companies each had their swans on the river, and even nowadays they are maintained on the upper reaches. The young cygnets were marked at the annual festival of "swan-upping," at which the City magnates used hugely to enjoy themselves. The old and the new "nicks" of the Vintners' Company are pictured here.



OLD AND NEW SWAN NICKS: VINTNERS' COMPANY.

So far back as 1556, the "Swane with ij Nekes at Mylke Street End" was known, and was then the property of the Vintners. In the coaching era it is best remembered as the headquarters of the great William Chaplin's huge coaching business. Chaplin succeeded William Waterhouse, who had established himself here in 1792, issuing a curious token bearing the representation of a mail-coach on one side and that of the Double-Necked Swan on the other, with the legend, "Speed, Regularity, and Security. Payable at the Mail Coach Office, Lad Lane, London, W.W."

Lad Lane was until recent years the name by which this part of Gresham Street was known, while the inn itself was generally called by the coaching fraternity the "Wonderful Bird."

Chaplin had in early days been a coachman himself. His career would have delighted that sturdy moralist, Hogarth, painter of the successful career of the Industrious Apprentice, for from that useful but humble position he rose to be the largest coach-proprietor in England, Deputy-Chairman of the London

and Southampton (now London and South-Western) Railway, and Member of Parliament for Salisbury. He is said to have accumulated half a million of money. Twenty-seven mails left London every night, and of these Chaplin horsed fourteen for various distances. Very many stage-coaches were in his hands, and at the height of the coaching era he is said to have owned nearly two thousand horses. He was an entirely level-headed man, and, seeing at an early stage that

MODERN SIGN OF THE "SWAN WITH TWO NECKS."

railways must succeed, threw in his lot with them. Railway directors were exceedingly anxious to win over the coaching proprietors, and to induce them to withdraw from the road, so that with no coaches running the public should of necessity, whether they liked it or not, be compelled to travel by rail. Chaplin sold off his stock before the oncoming railways depreciated it, and, joining Benjamin Worthy Horne, of the "Golden Cross," Charing Cross, founded the great carrying firm of Chaplin and Horne, which enjoyed the exclusive agency for the London and Birmingham Railway. There can be little doubt, although it was

denied by the early officials of that line, that Chaplin and Horne were really bought off the road, and the sum of £10,000 has been mentioned as the price of their withdrawal. Before that time had come, coaches issued from Chaplin's yard for many places on the north-western roads: the Carlisle Royal Mail; the Birmingham Royal Mail, "Courier," and "Balloon Post Coach"; the Chester "New Coach"; Coventry "Light Post Coach"; Liverpool Royal Mail; Holyhead "New Mail" and a stage-coach without any particular name; and the Manchester Royal Mail, "Defiance," "Regulator," and "Prince Saxe-Cobourg."

The "Spread Eagle" in Gracechurch Street has also disappeared. It was at one time a house of Chaplin's, and was afterwards owned in succession, together with the "Cross Keys" next door, by Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Mountain.

The "Green Man and Still," the last of the quartet of inns inquired after by Mr. Locker-Lampson, is the only one now standing, and may be seen at the corner of Oxford and Argyll Streets, close by Oxford Circus. It was not a coaching hostelry in the fullest sense, being only a place of call for the Oxford "Age," and for the Harrow and other north-westerly "short stages," running between London and the suburbs. It is now a railway receiving-office. This curious sign probably alludes to the old profession of the "herb-doctors," who distilled medicines from wild or cultivated herbs.

There were other inns whence Great North Road coaches set out, but they have all vanished. The "George and Blue Boar," Holborn, whence the famous "Stamford Regent" started, has long since been pulled down, and the "Inns of Court Hotel" stood on its site. The hotel building remains, but about 1912 it ceased to be a hotel, and has since been converted into offices for an Insurance Company. The "Regent" originally left London at six o'clock in the evening, but in 1822 the hour was altered to six in the morning, an unearthly time for those who had to go some distance

THE "SPREAD EAGLE," GRACECHURCH STREET.
(*From a Drawing by T. Hosmer Shepherd*, 1855.)

CORPORATION OF ECCLES,
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to reach Holborn, and necessitating, perhaps, getting up at three o'clock. The announcement by the proprietors that this alteration was for the "more perfect convenience" of their patrons seems ironical:—

SIX O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING
From London.

THE PROPRIETORS OF
THE REGENT COACH

Respectfully inform the public and their friends in particular, that, for their more *perfect convenience*, and to keep pace with the daily improvements in travelling, *the hour of its leaving London will be altered* on Monday, the 13th of May (and continued during the summer months),

TO SIX O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING,
Instead of Night.

The arrangements that are forming in furtherance of this long-desired alteration will ensure a steady and punctual conveyance of Passengers to Stamford by a Quarter before Six o'clock, and to Melton by a Quarter before Nine o'clock in the Evening.

The hours of leaving Melton and Stamford will NOT be altered.

The proprietors take this opportunity to acknowledge their sense of the decided patronage shown to the REGENT COACH under their several regulations, and to repeat their promise that no exertion shall be wanting to make it one of the most desirable conveyances to and from London.

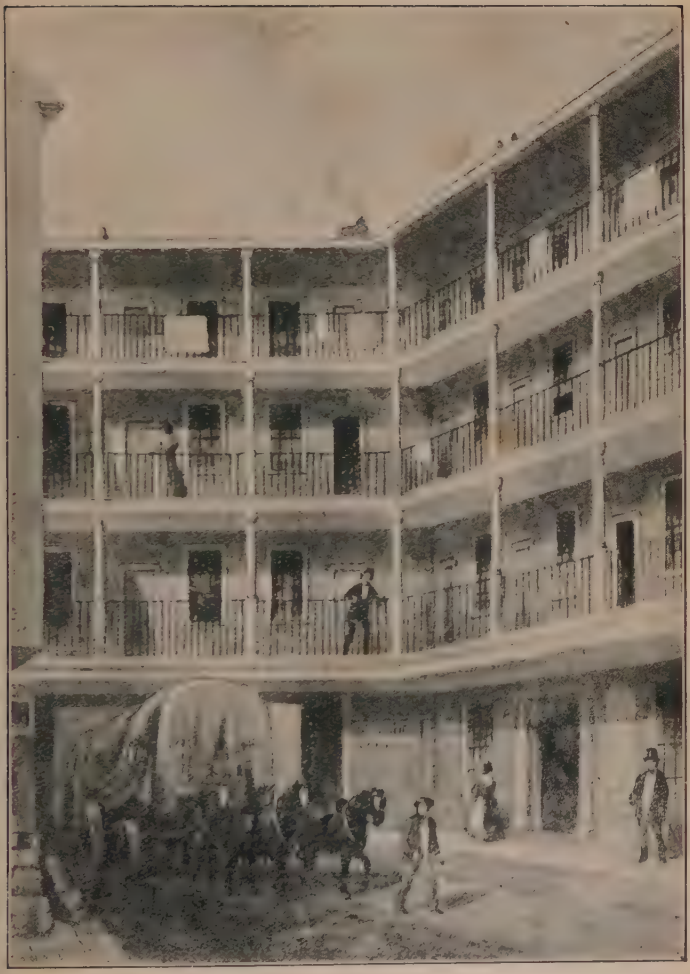
Passengers and Parcels booked at Mr. Weldon's, and the Bull and Swan Inn, Stamford; and at Mr. Sharp's, Bell Inn, Melton.—*Stamford, May* 1, 1822.

The "Saracen's Head," Snow Hill, which must not be confounded with the other and equally celebrated "Saracen's Head" in Aldgate High Street, was another very notable coaching establishment, and a galleried inn of picturesqueness and antiquity. Alas! that it has long since disappeared. Its history went back beyond the fifteenth century, and a reference made to it in 1522, when the suite of the Emperor Charles the Fifth lay here, speaks of the house as of

some importance :—" The signe of the Sersyns hed : xxx beddes, a stable for xl horses."

The sign, of course deriving from the Crusades, itself gives the inn a very high antiquity. It was a sign of a gruesome and savage aspect, and had its origin in the pictures the returning Crusaders drew of their adversaries. As Selden says :—" Our countrymen pictured them with huge, big, terrible faces, when in truth they were like other men. But this," he adds slyly, " they did for their own credits." The inn owed its later celebrity to Dickens, who made it the London inn of Mr. Squeers. Thus he describes it :—" Near to the jail, and by consequence near to Smithfield, on that particular part of Snow Hill where omnibus horses going eastward seriously think of falling down on purpose, and where horses in hackney cabriolets going westward not unfrequently fall by accident, is the coachyard of the Saracen's Head Inn ; its portal guarded by two Saracens' heads and shoulders frowning upon you from each side of the gateway. The inn itself, garnished with another Saracen's head, frowns upon you from the top of the yard. When you walk up this yard you will see the booking-office on your left and the tower of St. Sepulchre's Church darting abruptly up into the sky on your right, and a gallery of bedrooms upon both sides."

There is a " Saracen's Head " on Snow Hill to this day, but it is a modern building. From the old house went the " Lord Nelson," York, Newcastle, and Edinburgh coach ; the " Post," despite its name, a slow-coach, for Carlisle and Penrith, by Doncaster, Ferrybridge, and Greta Bridge, doubtless the one by which Mr. Wackford Squeers took his " dear pupils " to Dotheboys Hall ; and coaches to Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Shrewsbury, besides others for the western roads. The " Saracen's Head " was kept by Mrs. Mountain, in succession to her husband and her husband's father. Her son, Peter, managed the business for her, but it must not be supposed that she took no active part in it. To the



THE "SARACEN'S HEAD," SNOW HILL.
(*From a Drawing by T. Hosmer Shepherd*, 1855.)

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contrary, Mrs. Sarah Ann Mountain, like her contemporary, Mrs. Nelson, of the "Bull," Aldgate, possessed the most brilliant business capacity. She *built* coaches, as well as horsing them, and earned a profit by charging her partners down the road the mileage which in the usual course of business would have been paid over to a coach-builder.

There was no more expressive sight in the London of the beginning of the nineteenth century than the simultaneous starting of the mails every evening from the General Post Office. Londoners and country-cousins alike were never weary of the spectacle of the smart coaches, the businesslike coachmen, and the resplendent, scarlet-coated guards preparing to travel through the night, north, south, east, or west, with his Majesty's mails. Even the passengers shone with a reflected glory, and felt important as, one after the other, the twenty-seven mails began at the stroke of eight o'clock to move off from the double file that filled the street.

That street was not the broad thoroughfare of St. Martin's-le-Grand, but the narrow one of Lombard Street, in which the General Post Office was situated for many years, until 1829, when what is now called the "old" General Post Office, but was then the newly completed building of Smirke's, was occupied. The old headquarters can still be seen, in the Lombard Street Post Office of to-day. It is from here that the picture of the mails starting, forming the frontispiece of this volume, was taken. To our eyes, accustomed to the crowded thoroughfare of modern times, the street appears supremely dull and desolate, but that is only a retrospective way of looking at it.

Here is a testimony to the beauty of the scene. It is eloquent testimony, for it is De Quincey's: —"On any night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity—but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses—were what

might first have fixed the attention. Every carriage, on every morning of the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination—wheels, axles, linchpins, poles, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much rigour as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. . . . Every moment are shouted aloud by the post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years—Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen—expressing the grandeur of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then came the horses into play. Horses! Can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir! what sea-like ferment! what a thundering of wheels! what a trampling of hoofs! what a sounding of trumpets!"

IV

Now for Post Office history. Much has been made at the "old" General Post Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand: and although the building was not in existence until 1829, it has sent forth and received many mail-coaches. Its disappearance in 1912, we say, therefore severs the last link by which this busy quarter was connected with the old days.

The story of the Post Office goes back long before the G.P.O. was situated either here or at Lombard Street. The original Post Office was off Eastcheap.

THE MAILS STARTING FROM THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, 1832.
(*After James Pollard.*

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When it was there, the course of post between London and Edinburgh took three days. The first regular service was established in 1635, when Charles the First, to end the inefficiency of the communications between the two capitals, inaugurated "a running post or two, to run night and day, between Edinburgh and London, to go thither and come back again in six days." We may suppose that this did not work very well, for in 1649 we find the city of London establishing a post of its own with a regular staff of runners and postmasters between London and the North.

But with the Restoration came the establishment of the General Post Office and an instantaneous decline in the efficiency of the post, *six* days instead of three being taken for the single journey to or from Edinburgh. This roused the towns on the way to indignant protests, and the post was accelerated to "three and a half or four days," the acceleration being slower than the original time.

But however keenly the intermediate towns may have felt this, it could not have mattered much to Edinburgh, whose mail-bag was very scanty. One day in 1745, we are told, the mail brought only one letter, for the British Linen Company; and on another day in the same year only one was despatched to London, for Sir William Pulteney, the banker.

In 1750 things were no better, but eight years later an Edinburgh merchant, George Chalmers, procured an improvement. Before 1758 the Great North Mail set out three times a week and took eighty-seven hours in going north, and not fewer than one hundred and thirty-one from Edinburgh to London. This last itinerary was lengthened so greatly in time on account of stoppages made at Berwick and at Newcastle, ranging from three hours at one to twenty-four at the other. These delays Chalmers, in corresponding with the officials, proved to be quite needless. He also induced them to avoid the old and longer route through Thorne and York and to take the alternative road by Boroughbridge,

thus shortening the journey by twelve miles. The times were then fixed at eighty-two hours for the northward-bound mail, and eighty-five for the south. For his services the Government made Chalmers a grant of £600. Some years afterwards he induced the Post Office to run the mails six days a week.

But a greater than Chalmers was at hand in Palmer, the organiser of the mail-coach service. Palmer accomplished, according to De Quincey, "two things very hard to do on our little planet, the earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in comets: he had invented mail-coaches, and he had married the daughter of a duke. He was therefore just twice as great a man as Galileo, who did certainly invent (or, which is the same thing, discover) the satellites of Jupiter, those very next things extant to mail-coaches in the two capital pretensions of speed and keeping time; but, on the other hand, who did *not* marry the daughter of a duke." Palmer married, in point of fact, Lady Madeline Gordon, daughter of the Duke of Richmond, but De Quincey does not lay the stress he should have done on his having fought his postal scheme to success against the obstinacy and red-tapeism of the Post Office officials, itself an enterprise sufficient to daunt any but the stoutest heart. Government officials have a wonderful power of passive resistance and an insensibility to argument and proof which might be envied by a lamp-post. It was thought a brilliant rejoinder when one of these Post Office dunderheads replied to Palmer's scheme for supplanting the slow and uncertain post-boys by fast coaches with the observation that there was no reason why the post should be the swiftest conveyance in England! No doubt this witty gentleman resigned in an access of mortification when Palmer actually succeeded in being appointed Controller-General of the Post Office, with a salary of £1,500 a year and a two and a-half per cent. commission on a rise of the income above the £240,000 at which it stood when he was placed at the head of affairs. The first mail-coach was put upon

the Bath Road on the 8th of August 1784, and its success was so great and immediate that the chief towns of the kingdom presently began to petition for similar facilities to be accorded them. York was the first successful applicant, and a mail was put on the road between London, York, and Edinburgh in October of the same year, taking three nights and two days to perform the journey. This was not a very remarkable rate of speed, to be sure, but the times were not so hurried then. A greater speed was attained when the roads began to be reorganised by Telford and Macadam. Macadam's method of metalling the existing roads and Telford's reconstruction of steep and winding highways produced great results. To Macadam was due the greater speeds attained at last on the mail route between London and Edinburgh; for, although Telford's improved road was begun in 1824, it was never completed owing to the introduction of railways. Government had, in fact, by this time recognised the necessity of good roads, and, fresh from the reorganisation of the mail route between London and Holyhead, had determined on an improved communication between England and Scotland. This road, already referred to, was to be straight and as flat as engineering science could contrive it, and a portion—that between Edinburgh and Morpeth—was constructed about 1824, going by way of Soutra Hill, Lauderdale, Coldstream, and Wooler. The route between London and Morpeth was also surveyed and authorised, and portions between London and York actually begun, when the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825 convinced the authorities that the days of the road were numbered.

But although it was long apparent that a change was impending, coaches were not entirely run off the Great North Road for another twenty years, and Post Office surveyors were still busy expediting the mails over short cuts and roads of more favourable gradients. Thus in 1832 we find the Scotch mail

going by way of Selby. Here is the official time-bill for that year :—

MILES			
	LONDON	dep.	8.0 P.M.
12½	Waltham Cross	arr.	9.25 ,,
22	Ware	,,	10.26 ,,
35½	Buckland	,,	11.52 ,,
45½	Arrington	,,	12.57 A.M.
60	Huntingdon	,,	2.30 ,,
65¼	Alconbury Hill	,,	3.3 ,,
72¼	Stilton	,,	3.45 ,,
87	Stamford	,,	5.15 ,,
95	Stretton	,,	6.3 ,,
108½	GRANTHAM	,,	7.23 ,,
		dep.	8.3 ,,
115½	Long Bennington	arr.	8.53 ,,
122¼	Newark	,,	9.30 ,,
132¾	Scarthing Moor	,,	10.34 ,,
145½	Barnby Moor	,,	11.49 ,,
155¼	Rossington Bridge	,,	12.47 P.M.
159⅓	Doncaster	,,	1.12 ,,
166¼	Askerne	,,	1.55 ,,
179¾	Selby	,,	3.21 ,,
194	YORK	,,	4.54 ,,
		dep.	5.34 ,,
207¼	Easingwold	arr.	6.54 ,,
218	Thirsk	,,	7.58 ,,
227	Northallerton	,,	8.52 ,,
243	Darlington	,,	10.28 ,,
261½	Durham	,,	12.23 A.M.
276	NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE	,,	1.50 ,,
		dep.	1.53 ,,
290½	Morpeth	arr.	3.22 ,,
300½	Felton	,,	4.23 ,,
309¾	Alnwick	,,	5.17 ,,
324½	BELFORD	,,	6.47 ,,
		dep.	7.17 ,,
329¾	Berwick-on-Tweed	arr.	8.47 ,,
353½	Houndswood	,,	10.9 ,,
369¼	Dunbar	,,	11.41 ,,
380¼	Haddington	,,	12.45 P.M.
397¼	EDINBURGH	,,	2.23 ,,

Time—42 hours 23 minutes.

The " up " mail was timed considerably slower, 45 hours 39 minutes.

The punctuality of the mails was so great that the Glasgow and the Edinburgh mails, which went by Shoreditch and Islington respectively, and took different routes as far as Alconbury Hill, where their roads met, could always be depended upon to keep the official interval of four minutes which divided them at that point. Their route was identical between Alconbury Hill and Doncaster, where the Glasgow mail branched off to the left to Ferrybridge and Greta Bridge.

This was the *ne plus ultra* of Post Office enterprise on the Great North Road, and closes an era.

V

We have seen with what extraordinary speed letters were carried in the time of Charles the First between London and Edinburgh ; but how did folk travel ? They rode horseback, from kings, to nobles, and down to merchants ; princesses, madam, or my lady riding pillion. Private carriages—" coaches," they were called—had been introduced in 1553, when Queen Mary rode in one, as a novelty, from London to Westminster, drawn by six horses. In 1556 Sir Thomas Hoby had one of these strange machines, and just because the fact is expressly mentioned we see how rare they were. In fact, they went out of use altogether for a time, and were reintroduced by William Boonen, Queen Elizabeth's Dutch coachman, in 1564. On this occasion they came into better favour, and their numbers must have greatly increased, for a Bill " to restrain their excessive use " was introduced to Parliament, and rejected, in 1601. But both their make and the fearful condition of the roads forbade them being used in the country. Moreover, they had only shutters in place of windows, the first " glass coach " being that used by the Duke of York in 1661.

It was in 1658 that the first stage-coach between

London and Edinburgh was put on the road. It set out once a fortnight, but the length of the whole journey and just what kind of vehicle it was are unknown. Four days, however, and two pounds were consumed in travelling between London and York. The cost of the whole journey was four pounds.

In 1734 things do not seem to have been much better, John Dale advertising in the May of that year that a coach would take the road from Edinburgh for London "towards the end of each week, to be performed in nine days, or three days sooner than any coach that travels that road." After this matters went from bad to worse, and speed was slower twenty years later than it had been for a long time.

The *Edinburgh Courant* of 1754 contained the following advertisement :—

THE EDINBURGH STAGE COACH,

for the better accommodation of passengers, will be altered to a new genteel, two-end, glass coach machine, being on steel springs, exceeding light, and easy to go in ten days in summer and twelve in winter; to set out the

FIRST TUESDAY IN MARCH,

and continue it from HOSEA EASTGATE'S, the COACH AND HORSES in DEAN STREET, SOHO, LONDON, and from JOHN SOMERVILLE'S in the CANONGATE, EDINBURGH, every other Tuesday, and meet at BURROW BRIDGE on Saturday night and set out from thence on Monday morning, and get to LONDON and EDINBURGH on Friday. In winter to set out from LONDON to EDINBURGH every other (alternate) Monday morning, and to go to BURROW BRIDGE on Saturday night. Passengers to pay as usual.

Performed, if God permits, by
Your dutiful servant,
HOSEA EASTGATE.

Even Hosea Eastgate's conveyance stands forth as a miracle of swiftness and frequency when compared with the coach of 1763, which set out once a month and took a *fortnight, if the weather was favourable!* Probably this degeneracy of coaches was due to the practice of travellers clubbing together to hire a post-chaise for the journey. This was a plan eminently

characteristic of the Scottish mind. It both secured quicker travelling and saved expense. The Edinburgh papers of that time often contained advertisements inquiring for a fellow-passenger to share these costs and charges.

Edinburgh, as a matter of fact, even now a far cry, was beyond the ken of most Londoners in those times, and London was to Edinburgh folks a place dimly heard of, and never to be visited, save perhaps once in a lifetime. York, half-way, was better known, and was well supplied with coaches. The "Black Swan" in Coney Street, York, received and sent forth a coach—in after years known as the "York Old Coach"—so early as 1698. This appears to have always laid up for the winter and come out again in April, like the cuckoo, as a harbinger of spring. One of these spring announcements was discovered, some years since, in an old drawer at the "Black Swan." It runs :—

YORK FOUR DAYS
Stage-Coach.
Begins on Friday *the* 12*th of* April 1706.

ALL that are deſirous to paſs from *London* to *York*, or from *York* to *London*, or any other Place on that Road ; Let them Repair to the *Black Swan* in *Holbourn* in *London*, and to the *Black Swan* in *Coney Street* in *York*.

At both which Places they may be received in a Stage Coach every *Monday*, *Wedneſday*, and *Friday*, which performs the whole Journey in Four Days (*if God permits*). And ſets forth at Five in the Morning.

And returns from *York* to *Stamford* in two days, and from *Stamford* by *Huntingdon* to *London* in two days more. And the like Stages on their return.

Allowing each Paſſenger 14*l*. weight, and all above 3*d*. a Pound.

Performed By { *Benjamin Kingman.* / *Henry Harriſon.* / *Walter Bayne's.*

Alſo this gives Notice that Newcaſtle Stage Coach ſets out from York every Monday and Friday, and from Newcaſtle every Monday and Friday.

It is singular that this coach should have had a "Black Swan" at either end of its journey. The London house was in later years the well-known "Black Swan Distillery" in Holborn.

To display the many coaches, their names and times of arrival and departure, in these pages would afford but dull reading. Besides, Paterson and Cary, those encyclopædic old road-books, contain lists of them in interminable array: the "Highflyers," "Rockinghams," "Unions," "Amitys," "Defiances," "Wellingtons," "Bluchers," "Nelsons," "Rodneys," and what not. There was so extraordinary a run upon these popular names that they are often triplicated—and sometimes occur six times—on the local and by-road coaches; with the result that if the traveller desired to travel by the "Highflyer," let us say, to Edinburgh, he had to carefully sort it out from other "Highflyers" which flew not only to Leeds but to all kinds of obscure places.

The early stage-coaches must have been terribly trying. They were, as Byron says of the "kibitka," "a cursed kind of carriage without springs." As time went on they were not only provided with glass windows, but—as duly set forth in the advertisements—were furnished with springs and cushions. The resources of civilisation were not exhausted at this point, for it was gravely announced that the guards were armed, and the coaches were bullet-proof!

The life of a coach-proprietor was all hard work, with no little anxiety attached. Up early and to bed late—for on however large a scale his business might be, it was one peculiarly dependent upon the master's eye—he knew the inner meaning of the primæval curse, and earned his living by the sweat of his brow. And, lest that was not sufficient, the Government sweated him in a financial sense. The coaching business was the especial prey of Chancellors of the Exchequer, and yielded huge returns. If it be argued that coach-proprietors, unlike railway companies, had no parliamentary powers to obtain,

and no enormous expenses for purchase of land and construction of lines, this can be met by setting forth the heavy duties and taxes, the great outlay on turnpike tolls, and the relatively high cost of haulage by horses. The initial expenses of a railway are immense, the upkeep of lines and buildings large; but the actual cost of steam-power as against horse-traction is absurdly little. Railways, of course, pay passenger duty, and immense sums in the aggregate for rates and taxes; but they are not burdened as the coaches were. If it cost from £3 10s. to £6 15s. to travel "outside" or "inside" by ordinary stage-coach between London and Edinburgh, those high figures were the necessary results of Government exactions and turnpike imposts. Duties and taxes varied from time to time, but a stage-coach licensed, about 1830, to carry fifteen passengers paid a duty of threepence a mile, whether the coach carried a full load or not. Thus, for every single journey, a coach licensed to that extent paid £4 19s. 3d. A coach could be licensed to carry a smaller number, when the duties would be proportionately lighter, and coaches licensed for fifteen or so during the summer would take out a licence for perhaps six or eight in winter, when travellers were few and far between.

Suppose, now, that we roughly add up the working expenses of a stage-coach to Edinburgh. We start with the passenger-duty of £4 19s. 3d. To this we add, say, £4 for hire of coach at the rate of 2½d. a mile; £4 19s. 3d. for horsing, at 3d. a mile; and £6 12s., turnpikes, at 4d. This gives a total of £20 10s. 6d. But we have not yet done with expenses, including wages for coachmen, guards, ostlers, and helpers; advertising, rent, oil for lamps, greasing, washing, etc.

There would be six, or perhaps seven, coachmen, one driving about sixty miles, when he would be relieved by another; and perhaps four guards, because guards, not having the physical exertion of driving, could go longer journeys. The proportion of their

week's wages must be added to the debit account for the one journey, together with the proportion of the £5 yearly tax payable for every coachman and guard employed, and a similar annual sum for the coach itself. Any more items? Oh yes! Office expenses, clerks, etc., and incidentals. If we lump all these items together, they will mean an additional £12 cost on every journey to or from Edinburgh, bringing the *cost* to the proprietors to over £32.

Now for the other side of the account. Our coach is licensed for fifteen, and if we carry our four insides and eleven outsides all the way, it holds £65 10s. at the fares named above—about 4d. and 2d. a mile respectively. But how often were those fifteen "through" passengers? Not more, perhaps, than half would be bound for Edinburgh. Others might alight at York, or even at Grantham or Stamford. Others, again, might go to Newcastle. For fares thus lost, the proprietors looked to chance passengers; but the shillings and perhaps the two shillings taken on the way for short distances went, by common consent, into the coachmen's and guards' pockets, and were never entered on the way-bill. In this manner, and by their "tips," the men added to their somewhat meagre wages, which, rightly considered, were retaining-fees rather than full payment. This practice was generally known as "shouldering." Some proprietors, however, were stricter than others, and did not allow it. Of course it went on all the same, and the standing toast which they were compelled to give at annual coaching dinners, "Success to shouldering," with the proviso, "but don't let me find you at it," was a tacit acknowledgment of the custom. In later days, when proprietors paid slightly higher wages and tried to forbid tips, the coachmen were loth to give up these odd sums, for the diminution of tips was greater than the increase of wages. They then pocketed larger fares, and called the practice "swallowing." A tale is told of a coach approaching town, and the coachman asking his box-seat passenger

if he had any luggage. "No," said the passenger. "Then," rejoined the coachman, "do you mind getting down here, sir, because I mean to swallow you." The passenger got down, and was "swallowed" accordingly.

The average takings of the coach would certainly never, at the best of it, come to more than £50 a journey, leaving a balance of £15 10s. profit. Now, taking a year of three hundred and thirteen days, and coaches "up" and "down," this gives a profit of £9,702—not, be it borne in mind, going to one man. The "end men" had the greatest share, as they had also the heaviest expenses, and the "middle-ground men" got little beyond the mileage on which they horsed the coaches; but with twenty-five stages or so, and twenty-five participants in the profits, it will be seen that the individual earnings on one coach could not be classed very high.

VI

It was a costly as well as a lengthy business to travel from London to Edinburgh. Not so lengthy, of course, by mail as by stage-coach, but much more expensive. If you wished to take it comfortably during the forty-two hours and a-half or so of travelling, you went inside, especially if it happened to be in winter; but an inside place cost eleven guineas and a-half, which was thought a much larger sum in 1830 than it would be nowadays. Accordingly, the stalwart and the not particularly well-to-do, who at the same time wanted to travel quickly, went outside, whereby they saved no less than four guineas.

But let not the reader think that these respective sums of eleven and a-half and seven and a-half guineas comprised the whole of the traveller's expenses in the old days. There were numerous people to tip, such as porters, waiters, and last, but certainly not the least of them, the coachmen and guards, who at the

end of their respective journeys, when they left their seats to a new guard or a new Jehu, "kicked" the passengers, as the expressive phrase went, for their respective two shillings or so. To be kicked at intervals in this figurative manner, all the way between London and Edinburgh, was not physically painful, but it came expensive; and what with the necessary meals and refreshments during those forty-two hours or so, it could scarce have cost an "inside" less than fifteen guineas, or an "outside" less than eleven.

Now let us take the mazy "Bradshaw" or the simpler "A B C" railway guides, and see what it will cost us in time and pocket to reach the capital of Scotland. A vast difference, you may be sure. It is possible to go by three different routes, but the distance is much the same, and the times vary little, whether you go by Midland, London and North-Western, or by the Great Northern Railway. The last-named has, on the whole, the best of it, with a mileage of 395 miles, and a fast train performing the journey in seven hours and twenty-five minutes. It costs by any of these routes for first-class travelling, which answers to the "inside" of old times, fifty-seven shillings and sixpence, and thirty-two shillings and eightpence by third-class, equivalent to the "outside."* You need not tip unless you like, and even then but once or twice, and assuredly no one will ask you for one. Whether you travel "first" or "third," a dining-saloon and an excellent dinner are at your service for a moderate sum, and the sun scarce rises or sets with greater certainty than that the Scotch express or its London equivalent will set out or reach its destination at its appointed minute.

Accidents—when they happen—are beyond comparison more fearful on the railway than ever they were on the coaches; but they are rare indeed when it is considered how many trains are run. Coaching accidents were frequent, but just because they seldom ended fatally they do not figure so largely in coaching

*These are pre-war (1914-18) prices.

annals as might be expected. A dreadful accident, however, happened in 1805 to the Leeds "Union" coach, owing to the reins breaking and the horses dashing the vehicle against a tree. This occurred at a point about half a mile from Ferrybridge. William Hope, the coachman, and an outside passenger were killed, and many others seriously injured. The jury imposed a deodand of £5 on the coach and £10 on the horses.

In later years, an almost equally serious disaster happened to another Leeds coach, the "Express." It was racing with the opposition "Courier," which had been stopped at the bottom of the hill for the purpose of taking off the drag, and in the effort to pass was upset, with the result that a woman was killed on the spot, another was laid up for a year with a broken leg, and other passengers were more or less injured. Probably because of the evident recklessness displayed by the coachman, a deodand of £1,400 was laid on the coach. The mail-coaches were not so often involved in disasters as the stages. They had not the incentive to race, and smashes arising from this form of competition were infrequent. But other forms of accident threatened them and the stage-coaches alike. There were, for instance, fogs, and they were exceedingly dangerous. Penny, an old driver of the Edinburgh mail, was killed from this cause. Starting one foggy night, he grew nervous, and asked the guard, a younger and stronger man, to take the reins. He did so, and drove up a bank. The mail was upset, and Penny was killed.

Snow and frost were the especial foes of the mails on the northern stretches of the Great North Road, just as widespread floods were in the Huntingdonshire and Nottinghamshire levels, by Ouse and Trent; so that no mail-coach was completely equipped which did not in the winter months carry a snow-shovel.

But it was not always the north-country coaches that felt the fury of the snowstorms. The famous storm of December 1836 blocked all roads impartially.

The Louth mail, which left the Great North Road at Norman Cross, had to be abandoned and the mails transferred to the lighter agency of a post-chaise, while numerous others were buried in the snow as far south as St. Albans.

The earlier and later periods of coaching were productive of accidents in equal degrees. Stage-coaches may be said to date, roughly, from 1698, and continued as lumbering, uncomfortable conveyances until competition with the mails began to smarten them up, soon after 1784, when their second period dawned. Stage-coachmen of the first period were well matched with their machines, and not often fit to be trusted with any other cattle than a team of tired plough-horses. Their want of skill generally caused the accidents in those days, and the efficiency of others was affected by the conditions of their employment. The "classic" age had not arrived, and bad roads, ill-made coaches, and poor horses, combined with long hours of driving to render travelling quite dangerous enough, without the highwaymen's aid. Coachmen drove long distances in those days, and sometimes fell asleep from sheer weariness—a failing which did not conduce to the safety of the passengers. But the old coach-proprietors did not do the obvious thing—make the stages shorter and change the coachman more frequently. No; they contrived a hard, uncomfortable seat for him which rested on the bed of the axletree in such a manner as to shake every bone in his body, and to render repose quite out of the question.

To these clumsy or worn-out fellows succeeded the dashing charioteers of the palmy age of coaching, which we may say came into full being with the year 1800, and lasted for full thirty years. Many broken heads and limbs, and bruises and contusions innumerable, can be laid to the account of these gay sportsmen. Washington Irving has left us a portrait of the typical stage-coachman of this time, in this delightful literary jewel:—

"He cannot be mistaken for one of any other craft.

THE "LOUTH MAIL" STOPPED BY THE SNOW. ASSISTANCE IN PROSPECT, BUT NOT THE TIME TO HESITATE. THE LETTER-BAG SENT FORWARD WITH GUARD IN A POST-CHAISE AND FOUR.

(*After James Pollard*, 1836.)

PUBLIC LIBRARY

He has commonly a broad full face, curiously mottled with red, as if the blood had been forced by hard feeding into every vessel of the skin; he is swelled into jolly dimensions by frequent potations of malt liquors, and his bulk is still further increased by a multiplicity of coats in which he is buried like a cauliflower, the upper one reaching to his heels. He wears a broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, a huge roll of coloured handkerchief about his neck, knowingly knotted and tucked in at the bosom, and has in summer-time a large bouquet of flowers in his button-hole—the present, most probably, of some enamoured country lass. His waistcoat is commonly of some bright colour, striped; and his small-clothes extend far below the knees, to meet a pair of jockey-boots which reach about half-way up his legs.

"All this costume is maintained with much precision; he has a pride in having his clothes of excellent materials, and, notwithstanding the seeming grossness of his appearance, there is still discernible that neatness and propriety of person which is almost inherent in an Englishman. He enjoys great confidence and consideration along the road; has frequent conferences with the village housewives, who look upon him as a man of great trust and dependence, and he seems to have a good understanding with every bright-eyed country lass. The moment he arrives where the horses are to be changed, he throws down the reins with something of an air, and abandons the cattle to the care of the ostler; his duty being merely to drive from one stage to another. When off the box, his hands are thrust into the pockets of his great-coat, and he rolls about the inn-yard with an air of the most absolute lordliness. Here he is generally surrounded by an admiring throng of ostlers, stable-boys, shoe-blacks, and those nameless hangers-on that infest inns and taverns, and run errands, and do all kinds of odd jobs for the privilege of battening on the drippings of the kitchen and the leakings of the tap-room. These all look up to him as an oracle, treasure up his cant

phrases, echo his opinions about horses and other topics of jockey-lore, and, above all, endeavour to imitate his air and carriage. Every ragamuffin that has a coat to his back thrusts his hands in the pockets, rolls in his gait, talks slang, and is an embryo coachey."

But how different the last years of this gorgeous figure! When railways were projected, the coachman laughed at the idea. He thought himself secure on his box-seat, and witnessed the preparations for laying the iron rails with an amused confidence that his horses could run the "tin-kettles" off the road with little trouble. He kept this frame of mind even until the opening of the line that competed with him; and even when it was proved to demonstration that railways could convey passengers at least three times as swiftly as coaches, and at about a quarter of the cost, he generally professed to believe that "it couldn't last long." His was the faith that should have moved mountains—to say nothing of blighting locomotives; but it was no use. His old passengers deserted him. They were not proof against the opportunities of saving time and money. Who is? Nor did they come back to him, as he fondly thought they would, half-choked with cinders and smoke. He was speedily run off the road. There were those who liked him well, and, unwilling to see him brought low, made interest with railway companies to secure him a post; but he indignantly refused it when obtained; and, finding a cross-country route to which the railway had not yet penetrated, drove the coachman's horror—a pair-horse coach—along the by-ways. Gone by now was his lordly importance. He had not even a guard, and frequently was reduced to putting in the horses himself. He grew slovenly, and was maudlin in his drink. "Tips" were seldom bestowed upon him, and when he received an infrequent sixpenny-piece, he was known to burst into tears. The familiar figure of Belisarius begging an obolus is scarce more painful. The last of him was generally in the driving of the omnibus between the railway station and the hotel; a

ENTRANCE TO LONDON FROM ISLINGTON, 1809.
(*From an old Print.*)

CORPORATION
LIBRARY

misanthropic figure, consistently disregarded by his passengers, lingering, resolutely old-fashioned in dress, and none too civil, superfluous on the stage.

VII

These long preliminaries over, we may duly start for the North from the General Post Office, coming to Islington by way of Goswell Road. Here, at the "Peacock" or the "Angel," travellers of a century and a-half ago were one mile from London, or from Hicks's Hall, which was the same thing. A milestone proclaimed the fact, and its successor, with a different legend, stood until quite recently opposite the Grand Theatre, on Islington Green. Here stood the first toll-gate as you went out of London. Here also was the village pound for strayed horses and cattle. Here again, according to those who do not know anything at all about it, the bailiff's daughter of Islington might have met her lover; only, unhappily for *this* Islington, the old ballad refers to quite another Islington, away in Norfolk.

The usual suburban perils awaited wayfarers to Islington at any time during the eighteenth century, and those bound for it from the city were accustomed to wait at the Smithfield end of St. John Street until a number had collected, when they were convoyed outwards by the armed patrol stationed there for that purpose. But the footpads were quite equal to the occasion, and simply waited until those parties dispersed for their several homes, and then, like skilful generals, attacked them in detail. The Islington Vestry were obliged to make a standing offer of £10 to any one who should arrest a robber; but that this failed seems certain, for at a later period we find the inhabitants subscribing a fund for rewards to those who arrested evildoers.

Time has wrought sad havoc with Islington's once rural aspect, and with its old coaching inns. That grand coaching centre, the "Peacock," has utterly vanished, and so has the picturesque "Queen's Head," —gabled, Elizabethan—wantonly destroyed in 1829; while the "Angel," pulled down in 1819 and rebuilt, and again rebuilt in 1900, has since retired from business as a public-house, and is now a tea and lunch place, in the hands of a popular firm of caterers. In early days, and well on into the nineteenth century, the Green was really a pleasant spot, with tall elms

ISLINGTON GREEN, 1820.

shading the footpaths, and a very rustic-looking pound for strayed cattle. Near by stood for many years a little hatter's shop, bearing the legend in large characters, "Old Hats Beavered," and it is curious to note how, in a long succession of old prints, this shop and its now curiously sounding notice kept their place while all else was changing.

Islington was once a Cockney paradise, and to it

retired, as into the country, the good citizens and shopkeepers of London, setting up miniature parks and pleasances of their own. So favourite a practice was this that the witlings of that period, a hundred and fifty years ago, used to publish absurd notices supposed to have been found displayed at the entrances of these haunts. "The New Paradise," ran one of them, "Gentlemen with Nails in their Boots not Admitted." Perhaps also "Serpents Warned Off." At that time, and long before, Islington was resorted to on account of some alleged mineral waters existing here. "Islington," according to M. Henri Misson, who travelled in England, and wrote a book about us and our country in 1718, "is a large village, half a league from London, where you drink waters that do you neither good nor harm, provided you don't take too much of them." This is decidedly a "palpable hit," and may be commended to those who take medicinal waters in our own time.

"It is not much flock'd to by People of Quality," he goes on to observe. Here, at least, he is not out of date. People of Quality do not flock to Islington. The medicinal waters are all gone; and that Islington is, even now, not in any great degree a resort of fashion is an incontrovertible fact.

Between this and Highgate, the road leading to what the poets call the "true and tender North" is by no means happy. Any other of the classic highways of England begins better, and however delightful the Holloway Road may have been in the coaching age, it is in these crowded days a very commonplace thoroughfare indeed. The long reaches of mean streets and sordid bye-roads combine with the unutterably bad road surface to render the exit from London anything but pleasurable.

Sir Walter Scott, on his way down to Abbotsford in 1826, calls the Great North Road "the dullest road in the world, though the most convenient," and the description, minus the convenience, might well stand for its suburban portion to-day. In Sir Walter's time,

however, these first few miles were only just emerging from a condition in which dulness could have had no part. In fact, it may well be supposed that the travellers, who up to that time went by coach to York, well armed, found the journey a thought too lively. Indeed, the Holloway Road, into which they came, from the last outposts of civilisation, was, as it were the ante-chamber into that direful territory of highwaymen and footpads, the veritable Alsatias of Finchley Common and Whetstone. In fact, a few years earlier still, when there were no houses at Holloway at all, and no district known by that name, what is now called the Holloway Road was a lonely track, full of mud and water, through which the coach route ran, infested all the while by the most villainous characters, compared with whom the gay highwayman in ruffles and lace, and mounted on a mettlesome horse, was a knight indeed—a chevalier without fear or reproach. This stretch of road lay then between high banks, and considerably below the level of the surrounding fields. It was a "hollow" road, as such roads are called wherever they exist in the country—the actual, original Hollow Way from which, in the course of time, a whole residential district has obtained its name. Such roads, worn down through the earth by constant traffic, are always very ancient, and though the story of the Holloway Road at a period from a hundred and fifty to eighty years ago was a disgraceful one, the inhabitants of that part can console themselves by the soothing thought that, although it cannot claim the Roman ancestry of the route by Shoreditch, Waltham Cross, and Cheshunt, which was the Ermine Way, the road in question probably dates back to the respectable antiquity of mediæval times.

VIII

The road has been ascending ever since the General Post Office was left behind, and now we come to the beginning of Highgate Hill, where the old way over the hill-top, and the more recent one, dating from 1813, divide left and right. Here, at the junction of Salisbury Road with Highgate Hill, stands the Whittington Stone, marking the traditional spot where Dick rested on his flight, and heard the bells inviting him to

> Turn again, Whittington,
> Thrice Lord Mayor of London."

It is a pretty story, and one which, let us hope, will never be forgotten or popularly discredited; how the boy, running away from ill-treatment at his master's house in the city, halted here in his four-miles' flight, and resting on the slope of Highgate Hill, saw the clustered spires of London and the silvery Thames—it *was* silvery then down below, and heard the prophetic message of Bow Bells inviting him to return. If we can believe that he had his favourite cat with him, let us believe with joy, because it goes far to complete the tender story which has always held captive the hearts of the children; and God forbid we should grow the less tender towards the beautiful legends of our forbears as we grow older.

Bow Bells fulfilled their prophecy in full measure and running over, for Dick Whittington was chosen to complete the year of Mayor Adam Bamme who died in 1397, and was Mayor on three separate occasions as well; in 1397, 1406, and 1420. He was knighted, of course, and, moreover, he became one of the richest men of his time. Perhaps the most dramatic thing recorded of his prosperous career as Mayor and a member of the Mercers' Company, is that splendid entertainment which he gave to Henry the Fifth and

his Queen at Guildhall in his last year of office, when he threw into the fire bonds equal to £60,000 of our money, due to him from the king—a generous, nay, a princely gift.

But he was not "Lord" Mayor. The tradition is wrong in that respect. There were "Mayors," but no "Lord Mayor" until 1486.

Who was Richard Whittington? We know him well in his later career as a Mercer, and as a pious and patriotic citizen; but whence came he? Was he the poor and friendless lad of legend? Well, not quite that. Poor, perhaps, because he was the youngest of three brothers; but not friendless, for his family was of no mean descent. His father, Sir William Whittington, had an estate on which he lived, at Pauntley, in Gloucestershire, and other possessions of the family were at Sollers Hope, Herefordshire. Misfortunes fell upon Sir William, who seems to have died not long after Dick was born; but the family had friends in the FitzWarrens, of whom one, Sir John, was a prominent Mercer in London. Dick's brothers had, as elder brothers have nowadays, the best chances, as it seemed, and remained in the country, enjoying the family property, or following rural employments. Dick we may readily picture as being sent to FitzWarren, to learn a trade. The great man probably took him for old acquaintance' sake, and, having received the lad of thirteen, and turned him over to one of his many underlings, promptly forgot him. It is a way with the great, not yet obsolete. We may with a good conscience reject that part of the legend which tells how Dick was found, an obscure waif and stray, on FitzWarren's doorstep, and taken, in compassion, to serve as a scullion. The pantomimes always insist on this, and on the ferocious cook's ill-treatment of him; but pantomime librettists have many sins to answer for.

No; Dick was an apprentice, a poor one, and doubtless taken without a premium; but not a scullion. There can be little doubt that the country

lad, thus thrown into the midst of many other apprentices in FitzWarren's house, must have been an object of sport. They would taunt him with his country ways, and, superior in their clothes of London cut, ridicule, with the cruel satire of boys, his homely duds. Possibly his flight had some such origin as this.

But it is chiefly on the legend of the cat that more or less learned antiquaries have so savagely fallen, with intent to explain it away. The cat, they assure us, was a fable, and they go on to say that it was from coal vessels called "cats," in which Whittington embarked his money, that the story grew. Another school of commentators, eager to reduce the pretty tale to commonplace, tell us that it originated in the old French word for a purchase, *achat*. To what shifts will they not proceed in this hunt for an ignoble realism! Whittington is not known to have engaged in the ownership of colliers, or in the carrying of coal. A Mercer has no commerce with such things. Then, that derivation from the French *does* smell of the lamp, does it not?

Now for the truth of his embarking his favourite cat as a venture, to be sold at a profit in some foreign port. The story, regarded with a knowledge of those times, is by no means an improbable one. Indeed, to go further, it is quite likely. Cats were in that era comparatively rare. They had a high value at home; were even more valuable in Europe, and in the darkly-known countries on the confines of the known world—a small world, too, before the discovery of America—they were almost priceless.

Many childish searchings of heart have arisen over Dick's parting with his cat for love of gain. Did Dick, like the Arab who sold his steed, repent with tears? Perhaps Dick was the happy possessor of two cats, and his favourite was a "tom." If the other was a she-cat, and as prolific as are our own, no doubt Dick would have been glad to have got rid of her; except that the progeny themselves were marketable. To

this, then, we are reduced: that Dick Whittington as a boy bred cats for exportation, and that his black-and-white Tom, as the progenitor of them all, was the founder of his fortunes. The legend tells us of only one cat, which, when the vessel was driven out of her course to the coast of Barbary, was sold for immense riches of gold and precious stones to the Sultan, whose palace was infested with mice. That may do for the pantomimes; but, unhappily, the ships that were so unfortunate in those times as to be driven on those shores were plundered and their crews slain. It was cheaper than buying.

But whatever the details, it is certain that Whittington owed his first successes to his cat. Several things, despite all destructive criticism, point to the essential truth of the popular story. Firstly, original portraits, painted from the life, testify to it by showing Whittington's hand laid caressingly on a black and white cat. Then, Whittington was the rebuilder of the old New Gate, and his effigy, with a cat at his feet, stood in one of its niches until the building was pulled down hundreds of years afterwards. Finally, a very remarkable confirmation of the story came from Gloucester in 1862, when, on a house occupied by the Whittington family until 1460 being repaired, the fragment of a carved chimney-piece of that century was discovered, bearing the sculpture of a boy carrying a cat in his arms. It may reasonably be claimed that these evidences, together with the popular belief in the story, which can be traced back almost to Whittington's own day, confound unbelievers.

The present Whittington Stone is the degenerate and highly unornamental descendant of quite a number of vanished memorials to the great Lord Mayor which have occupied this spot since his day. It is not by any means a romantic spot to the sight nowadays, but for those who can bring romance with them in their own minds, it matters little that the heights just here are crowned with suburban villa roads, that a public-house -the "Whittington Stone

Tavern "—stands by, or that the whole neighbourhood reeks vulgarity. The present stone is dated 1821, and succeeded one which had disappeared shortly before, itself the successor in 1795 of a cross. The existing inscription was recut, and railings enclosing the stone put up in 1869 ; a public-house gas-lamp now crowning and desecrating the whole.

IX

It is a far cry from the London County Council, the present highway authority at Highgate, to the first roadmaker here, in 1364. A hermit, William Phelippe by name, at that time lived in a little cell on the lower slope of Highgate Hill, looking down upon London. From that remote eyrie, had he been a man of imagination, he might have beheld prophetic visions of London's future sprawling greatness, when the tide of life should rise to the crest of his hill and bring with it bricks and mortar, wood-pavements, cable-tramways, and other things of equal use and beauty. He foresaw none of these things, possibly because he did not sufficiently mortify the flesh. Certainly he was a hermit not without wealth, and perhaps therefore not one of your sad-eyed ascetics. He had a goodly balance in some old earthenware crock under the floor, or at the bank —the road bank of the Hollow Way, very old-established—and he had ample leisure, unencroached upon by toilette requirements, for which hermits had no use. Lazing in his cell commanding the road — it stood near where the Whittington Stone stands now—he had often noticed how wet, miry, and full of sloughs was the Hollow Way, and with what difficulty travellers ascended by it. Accordingly he devised a scheme by which he conferred benefits alike upon the travellers along the road and the farmers of Highgate. He directed and paid for the digging of gravel and the laying of it along the road, and in

the work presently expended all his money. But in so doing he had made an excellent investment; much better than leaving it on deposit at the bank mentioned above, where, in the nature of things, it accrued no interest; for he procured a decree from Edward the Third, authorising "our well-beloved William Phelippe, the hermit," to set up a toll-bar, and licensing him to levy tolls and keep the road in repair for "our people passing between Heghgate and Smethfelde." Thus were the first toll-bar and the first turnpike-keeper established, and we may judge that the undertaking was profitable from the records that show how very largely the roadside hermits throughout the country went into the business of road and bridge making or mending shortly afterwards. There were hermits of sorts: some authorised, and some not; some who did good work in this wise and some who did nothing at all, and yet continued to live substantially on the mistaken gifts of wayfarers. The profession of the eremite was not without its jealousies. An industrious road-maker might have a cell placed in a position outside a town favourable for the collection of dues, when another would set up business, say a quarter of a mile further out, and so intercept the money; so that travellers having paid once, had nothing for the real Simon Pure. Having satisfied Codlin, they disregarded Short; whereupon it not infrequently happened that if Short were the more muscular of the two he would go and have it out with his rival, while the world went by, scandalised at the apostolic blows and knocks these holy men were dealing one another.

William Phelippe's licence was renewed every year. His tariff of tolls is still extant, and we read that for every cart carrying merchandise, its wheels shod with iron, twopence per week was paid; if not shod with iron, one penny. Every horse carrying merchandise was charged one farthing per week. Pedestrians and horsemen without goods went free. These charges seem absurdly small until we multiply them by twenty, which gives results representing the present value of

money, and then it will be found that those ancient tolls were on much the same scale as those which existed until July 1st, 1864, when all turnpikes on public highways within fifty miles of London were abolished by Act of Parliament.

A great gap stretches between the time of our road-making hermit and that of Telford—a gap of four hundred and fifty years. Yet, although Highway Acts were from time to time devised for the betterment of the roads, their condition remained bad, and there was always, since 1386, the crest of Highgate Hill to surmount.

Unless we take this hill-top route to the left we shall not have seen Highgate; nor, in truth, is there much to see, now that the old Gatehouse Tavern is gone, and with it the last outward and visible connection with the days of yore. The tavern marked the site of the old turnpike-gate that stood here, the lineal successor of the hermit's original pitch lower down, when the old route to Barnet by Tallingdon Lane, Crouch End, Hornsey Great Park, Muswell Hill, Friern Barnet, and Whetstone was superseded by the new one through the Bishop of London's estate, by Finchley and Whetstone, in 1386. It is in the existence at that time of the Bishop's park that we may perhaps seek with success the origin of the name of "Highgate," which does not necessarily allude to the very obviously "high" gate situated here—more than 350 feet above sea-level. No; it was the "haigh" gate, the portal which gave access through the enclosure (*haia*) with which my Lord Bishop's domain was presumably surrounded. Through his land all traffic passed until it emerged on the other side of Whetstone, where, commanding the entrance to Barnet, stood another gate in receipt of tolls, swelling the income of that very business-like ecclesiastic and his successors for hundreds of years.

At the Highgate end dues were collected on horned cattle, among other things, and here originated the practice of being initiated into the freedom of Highgate,

a mock ceremonial founded upon Roman Catholic rites at the time of the Reformation. For three hundred years this farcical observance was continued at the tavern by the gate, and only fell into disuse with the decay of coaching. Those who had not previously passed this way were "sworn in on the horns," a practice traced to the unwillingness of the cattle drovers who frequented the tavern to allow strangers to mix with them. This exclusiveness no doubt originated in the fear of trade secrets being divulged, a feeling which may still be met with among commercial travellers of the older school, who resent the appearance of the mere tourist in their midst. The stranger who in olden times happened upon these drovers at Highgate was discouraged from taking bite or sup here, and only permitted to join them after having kissed the horns of one of their beasts. This speedily became elevated (or degraded, shall we say?) into a sort of blasphemous ritual parodying the admission of a novice into the Church, and this again, with the lapse of time and the dying of religious hatreds, developed into the merely good-natured farce played during the last hundred years of the existence of the custom.

When the coaches pulled up here, it was soon discovered, by judicious questioning, who were the strangers who had not been made "free." They were made to alight, and, having removed their hats and kissed a pair of horns mounted on a pole, "the oath" was administered by the landlord in this wise: – "Upstanding and uncovered: silence. Take notice what I now say to you, for *that* is the first word of the oath; mind *that*. You must acknowledge me to be your adopted father. I must acknowledge you to be my adopted son. If you do not call me father you forfeit a bottle of wine; if I do not call you son I forfeit the same. And now, my good son, if you are travelling through this village of Highgate, and you have no money in your pocket, go call for a bottle of wine at any house you may think proper

to enter and book it to your father's score," and so forth.

An initiate had to swear never to drink small beer when he could get strong (unless he preferred small); never to eat brown bread when he could get white (unless he preferred brown); never to kiss the maid when he could kiss the mistress (unless he preferred the maid, and in case of doubt he might kiss both); after which he had to kiss the horns—or the woman in the company who appeared the fairest, as seemed good to him, the ceremony concluding with the declaration of his privileges as a freeman of Highgate. Among the well-known privileges were—that if he felt tired when passing through Highgate and saw a pig lying in a ditch, he might kick the pig away and take its place, but if he saw three lying together he must only kick away the middle one and lie between the other two!

X

It was on Highgate Hill that the great Francis, Lord Bacon, whom some believe to have written Shakespeare's dramas, fell a martyr to his scientific enthusiasm. Driving up this chilly eminence one winter's day when the snow lay on the ground, it occurred to him that, from its chemical constituents, snow must possess admirable preservative properties, and he accordingly resolved immediately to put this theory to the proof. Stopping his carriage at a neighbouring farmhouse, he purchased a fowl and stuffed it carefully with snow. Being in weak health at the time, he took a chill, and before he could be driven home, became so alarmingly ill that he was obliged to be carried to Lord Arundel's house at Highgate. There a damp bed aggravated his seizure, so that in a few days he died, in 1626.

Farmhouses are far to seek from Highgate Hill nowadays, new roads and streets of shops being more

general. With the end of the eighteenth century, Highgate became a populous little town, but its outskirts did not altogether lose their terrors for travellers. Suburban villas had begun to sparsely dot these northern heights of London with the coming of the new era, but the New Police had not yet been brought into being; and so belated dwellers in these wilds afforded fine sport for the footpads, who, hunting in couples, and armed with horrible pitch-plasters, attacked the mild citizen from behind, and, clapping a plaster over his mouth, reduced him to an enforced silence, while they emptied his pockets at leisure. It was late one night in 1807 that Grimaldi, the most famous of all clowns, was robbed on Highgate Hill by two footpads. They spared him the usual plaster, perhaps because there was no one else about, and so it did not matter in the least how loudly he might shout for help. Among minor articles of spoil, they secured a remarkable watch which had been given him two years before as a testimonial by his many admirers. The dial represented his face in character when singing his popular comic song, "Me and my Neddy." The robbers, seeing this, immediately recognised him. Looking at one another, they could not make up their minds to rob him of his treasure, and so they gave it back, Grimaldi goggling and grinning at them the while, as on the stage. So, with a vivid recollection of Sadler's Wells, and bursting with laughter, they left him.

It is peculiarly unfortunate for those who are uncertain about their aspirates that London and its neighbourhood should abound in place-names beginning with the letters "A" and "H." Cockneys have ever—or 'ave hever, shall we say?—been afflicted with this difficulty; but they are overcoming the tendency of their forbears to speak of "'Ornsey, 'Ampstead, 'Igit, 'Arrow, 'Omerton, 'Ackney, 'Endon, or 'Atfield." The classic anecdote in this connection is that of the City Alderman who lived at Highgate, praising his locality to a distinguished guest at a Mayoral banquet.

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OLD HIGHGATE ARCHWAY, DEMOLISHED 1897.

"Don't you think 'Iget pretty?" he asked.

"Really," the guest is supposed to have replied, "I haven't known you long enough to say."

"I'm not talking of meself," returned the Alderman, "but of 'Iget on the 'Ill."

Until 1813 coaches and foot-passengers alike toiled over the Hill, through Highgate village, and by a roundabout road into East End, Finchley, which, with its adjoining hamlets, was until quite recently so greatly cut off from London by these comparatively Alpine heights and the lack of suburban railways, that it was, for all practical purposes, as distant as many other places fifty or sixty miles away, but situated on more level roads or on direct railway routes. To remedy this the Archway Road was cut direct from the Upper Holloway Road to East End, saving half a mile in the distance to be travelled and a hundred feet in the height to be climbed.

The Archway and the Archway Road were constructed about 1813, following upon the failure of the original idea of driving a tunnel through the hill-top. The Hill is a great outstanding knob of London clay, a substance both difficult and dangerous to pierce: but it was not until the work was nearly completed that it fell in, one day in 1812, happily before the labours of the day had been begun. The present open cutting of the Archway Road, rather over a mile in length, took the place of the projected tunnel, and the Archway was constructed for the purpose of carrying Hornsey Lane across the gap. If an unlovely, it was in its way an impressive, structure, even though the impression was rather of the nightmare sort. It was scarcely necessary, for Hornsey Lane has been at no time a place of great resort, and the traffic along it could have been diverted at small cost, and with little inconvenience made to cross the Archway Road by a circuitous route. Highgate Archway has now disappeared, giving place to a lighter structure, spanning the road without the support of the cumbrous old piers which, until the summer of 1900, continued to block three-fourths of

the way. It has gone because the road-traffic has grown with the suburbs and the way was not wide enough; but its disappearance removes a landmark proclaiming where town and country met.

The making of the Archway and the road was no public-spirited act, but the commercial undertaking of a Company, whose total expenses were very large, and, by consequence, the tolls exacted extremely high. Pedestrians were not chargeable at ordinary toll-gates, but here they had to pay a penny, or go the tedious way over the Hill. Sixpence was levied on every laden or draught horse.

It was not a profitable undertaking, even at these rates, and the tolls had a very decided effect in stemming the advance of Suburbia in this direction. In 1861, when the abolition of tolls within fifty miles of London was a burning question, the Company owed the Consolidated Fund no less than £13,000. The Government bought it out for £4,000, receiving £9,000 by instalments spread over fifteen years, after which period the road was to be declared free. It was accordingly opened free of toll in 1876. And thus it remained, as in the illustration, until 1897, when it was demolished and the roadway widened. The present Archway was opened in 1900.

XI

East End, Finchley, to which we now come, is one of the many straggling settlements built upon Finchley Common. Stretches of fields alternate with rows of new shops and tiny old-world cottages. Here stands the "Bald-Faced Stag," with the effigy of a stag surmounting the appropriately bald elevation of that huge and ugly public-house. The yards of monumental masons jostle it on either hand; a grim and unpleasing conjunction, and a prelude to those vast townships of

London's dead, the St. Marylebone, Islington, and St. Pancras Cemeteries, which with other properties of the Cemetery Companies render the road dismal and people these northern heights with a vast population of departed citizens. The merry market-gardener has betaken himself and his cabbages to other parts, and the builder builds but sparely.

Just where the Great Northern Railway bridge crosses over the road at East End stands the "Old White Lion," in a pretty wooded dip of the road. The house was once known, and marked on the maps as the "Dirt House," from its having been the house of call of the market-wagons on the way to London with produce, and on the way back with loads of dirt and manure. The wood was also known as "Dirt House Wood." It was here also that Horne the coachmaster's stables were situated.

To this succeeds North Finchley, beginning at the junction of a road from Child's Hill with the Great North Road, known as Tally Ho Corner. North Finchley, called by the genteel "Torrington Park," is yet another settlement, filched, like the cemeteries, from Finchley Common by successive iniquitous Acts of Parliament at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Could the gay highwaymen who, a hundred years ago, were gathered to their fathers at the end of a rope down Tyburn way revisit Finchley, the poor fellows would sadly need a guide. Where, alas! is Finchley Common, that wide-spreading expanse of evil omen on which these jovial spirits were so thoroughly at home? Finchley Common, once second only to the far-famed Hounslow Heath, has long since been divided up between the many who, more than a hundred years ago, conspired to cheat the people of their birthright in this once broad expanse of open space. The representatives of the people at Westminster allowed it, and my Lord Bishop of London profited by it, together with lesser folk, each in their several degrees. The Common then extended to considerably over two thousand acres. Of this vast

THE GREAT COMMON OF FINCHLEY: A PARLOUS PLACE.

tract only a few acres are left, beyond North Finchley. The rest was sold quietly, and by degrees, for absurdly small sums.

Between 1700 and 1800 the great Common of Finchley was a parlous place, and not one of the better-known highwaymen but had tried his hand at "touching the mails" as they went across this waste; or patrolled the darkest side of the road, ready to spring upon the solitary traveller. Indeed, the child-like simplicity of the lonely travellers of those days is absolutely contemptible, considering the well-known dangers of the roads. For instance, on the night of the 28th August, 1720, a horseman might have been observed in the act of crossing Finchley Common. He had fifteen guineas in his pocket, and ambled along as though he had been in Pall Mall instead of on perhaps the most dangerous road in England. At a respectful distance behind him came his servant, and just in front of him, midway of this howling wilderness, stood three figures. "There is an eye that notes our coming," says the poet, and three pairs of eyes had perceived this wayfarer. They belonged to an enterprising individual named Spiggott and to two other ruffians, whose names have not been handed down to posterity. The weirdly named Spiggott was apparently above disguising himself; his companions, however, might have stood for stage brigands, for one of them had the cape of his coat buttoned over his chin, and the other wore a slouched hat over his eyes. In addition to this, he kept the ends of his long wig in his mouth—which seems rather a comic opera touch. It is to be hoped, rather than expected, that the traveller with the guineas saw the humour of it. In the twinkling of an eye one brigand had seized his horse and made him dismount, while the others covered him with their pistols. The servant also was secured, the guineas transferred with the dexterity of a practised conjurer, the horses turned loose, and then the three rode away, leaving the traveller and his servant to get on as best they

could. Spiggott eventually paid the penalty of his rashness in not disguising himself in accordance with the canons of the hightoby craft, for when, a little later in his career, he was caught, with some others, in an attempt on the Wendover wagon at Tyburn, he was identified by the Finchley traveller. The end of him was the appointed end of all his kind. The moral of this story seems to be "Wear a mask when engaged in crime."

In 1774, Edmund Burke, travelling to Malton, in Yorkshire, was stopped here by two highwaymen, who robbed him of ten guineas, and his servant of his watch, in the most easy way. Some of these highwaymen were, indeed, persons who took their calling in an earnest and whole-hearted manner, and doubtless regarded Jack Sheppard as a mere scatter-brain, quite unfitted to be in business for himself. Thoroughly business-like men were Messrs. Everett and Williams, who entered into a duly drawn and properly attested deed of partnership, by which it was agreed that they should work together on Finchley Common and elsewhere and divide the profits of their labours into equal shares. Their industry prospered, and the common fund soon reached the very respectable total of £2,000. But when required to render accounts and to pay over half this amount, Mr. Williams refused; whereupon his partner brought an action-at-law against him, in 1725. A verdict for £20 was actually obtained, and appealed against by the defendant. The court then very properly found the matter scandalous, and sentenced Everett to pay costs, the solicitors engaged on either side being fined £50 each for their part in this discreditable affair. One partner was executed, two years later, at Maidstone, and the other at Tyburn, in 1730.

There still exists an ancient oak by the road at a place called Brown's Wells, at the corner of a lane nearly opposite the "Green Man," and in the trunk of this last survival of the "good old days" there have been found, from time to time, quite a number of

pistol bullets, said to have been fired by passing travellers at the trunk to frighten the highwaymen who might chance to be hiding behind it, under cover of the night. The tree itself has long borne the name of Turpin's Oak, no less celebrated a person than the redoubtable Dick himself having once frequented it. History fails to inform us who was the Brown after whom the Wells were named. I suggest they should be, and were in the first place "Brent Wells"; a source of the river Brent. Nor are those Wells—whatever they may have been—now in existence, while the name itself is only perpetuated by two or three old stuccoed villas beside the road.

TURPIN'S OAK.

Turpin, of course, is the greatest of all the rascals who made the name of the Great North Road a name of dread. Before him, however, the redoubtable Jack Sheppard figured here, but not, it is sad to relate, in an heroic manner. In fact that nimble-fingered youth, after escaping from the Stone Jug (by which piece of classic slang you are to understand Newgate to be meant) had the humiliation to be apprehended on Finchley Common, disguised in drink and a butcher's blue smock. That was the worst of those roystering blades. The drink was the undoing of them all. If only they had been Good Templars, and had sported the blue ribbon, it is quite certain that they had not been cut off untimely: and might, with reasonable luck, even have retired with a modest competence in early years. It was in 1724 that Jack Sheppard was arrested by Bow Street runners on the Common, and

the fact somewhat staggers one's belief in the wild lawlessness of that place. To capture a highwayman in his own peculiar territory ! One might just as soon expect to hear of the Chief Commissioner of Police being kidnapped from Scotland Yard. And yet it is quite certain that Finchley was no safe place for a good young man with five pounds in his pocket and a mere walking-stick in his hand, whether he proposed to cross it by night or day. Even sixty-six years later this evil reputation existed ; for, in 1790, the Earl of Minto, travelling to London, wrote to his wife that instead of pushing on to town at night, he would defer his entry until morning, " for I shall not trust my throat on Finchley Common in the dark." Think of it ! And Dick Turpin had been duly executed fifty years before !

Of the many names in the long and distinguished roll of road agents who figured here at some time or another in their meteoric careers, it is not possible to say much. There was the courageous and resourceful Captain Hind, the whimsically nicknamed " Old Mob," burly Tom Cox, Neddy Wicks, and Claud Duval. Duval's proper territory is, however, the Bath Road.

The palmy days of the highwayman were before 1797, the year of Pitt's Act for Restricting Cash Payments. Before then, travellers carried nothing but gold, and as they required plenty of that commodity on their long and tedious journeys, the booty seized by these gentry was often considerable. Bank notes then came into favour, and were issued for as low a denomination as one pound. These would have been a perilous kind of plunder, and accordingly as they grew popular, so did the certainty of a good haul from coaches and post-chaises diminish, until panics came, banks failed, and paper money became for a time a discredited form of currency. By that time the roads were better patrolled, and coin was to be conjured from the pockets of the lieges with less safety than before. From these causes, and from the new law

which made it penal to receive stolen goods as well as to steal them, we may date the decadence of a great industry, now utterly vanished from the roads.

XII

WHETSTONE, coming next after the Finchleys, is held in local legends to have acquired its name from the battered old stone still to be seen embedded in the ground by the signpost of the "Griffin" inn. On it the men-at-arms are said to have whetted their swords and spears before the battle of Barnet. The sceptical smile at this antiquity, and for their benefit there is a rival legend which gives the date as that of 1745, when King George's army marched down to meet Prince Charles and his Highlanders. Antiquaries have often demolished this derivation of the place-name; but the hoary (and quite unveracious) tale survives, and is doubtless immortal. You may explain it away, but the stone is there, and your local patriot is ever a materialist in such a resort.

"THE WHETSTONE."

It is a straggling, broad-streeted village, with a breadth implying the originally small value of the land, and encroachments here and there upon the old building-line proving both the implication and the fact that, many years ago, there were those who, having the foreknowledge of a coming betterment,

and more daring than their neighbours, grabbed while they might. Many inns, laundries, dairy-farms, great black-timbered barns, and a few rotting hoardings and unfinished houses make up the long street and tell alike of a vanished rusticity and of an arrested development.

Chaplin, the great coach-proprietor, had large stables here, his first stage out of London on the northern roads. They were placed here, rather than at Barnet, in order to avoid expenses at Whetstone Gate, situated down the road, near Greenhill Cross. Whetstone Gate gave travellers going north the welcome intelligence that they had finally passed Finchley Common and come to the better roads and more reputable society of Barnet, where they were safe from highwaymen.

The road across Finchley Common was in passive alliance with these gentry. When Pepys visited Barnet in 1660, partly for sake of its now forgotten medicinal waters, he found the highway "torne, plowed, and digged up," in consequence of the heavily laden wagons and their long struggling teams of horses and oxen, which had made havoc with what had been a fairly good roadway. Progress was difficult, even in the best circumstances, and when stress of weather made it almost impossible, the highwaymen robbed with impunity, and absolutely at their leisure

The road remained more or less in this condition up to the early years of the nineteenth century. This was partly owing to the mistaken local patriotism which had prevented the remodelling of it in 1754, when the rustics of Whetstone routed the surveyor and his labourers at the point of the pitchfork. Better counsels prevailed in the first decade of the new era, and the eight miles of highway under the control of the Whetstone and Highgate Turnpike Trust rose in 1810 to be considered as good as any in the kingdom. It then became possible, for the first time in its history, for the Barnet stage to leave for London and to reach

its destination without the necessity of stopping on the way for tea. The Trustees were naturally pleased with their road, and so in 1823 received with some surprise, under the new Act for the improvement of the line of road from London to Holyhead, a demand for the reconstruction of the highway between Prickler's Hill and the southern end of Barnet town. They pointed out how greatly superior their portion of the road was to others, but to no purpose. The Government admitted the excellence of the surface, but boggled at the severity of the gradient, and practically insisted on its being reduced.

The Trustees were dismayed. Telford and Macadam supplied rival plans, and both foreshadowed heavy expense. Telford's idea was to slice off the top of Barnet Hill, and to run the road through a more or less deep cutting through the street; a plan which, if adopted, would have left the houses and the footpaths in the position of buildings overhanging a cliff. Fortunately for Barnet the scheme drawn up by Macadam prevailed. It was for the partial filling up of the dip in the road between Prickler's Hill and the excessively steep entrance into the town, an entrance even now by no means easily graded. What it must originally have been may readily be judged by looking down from the present embanked road to the old one, seen going off to the left, in the hollow where the old roadside houses still stand, among them the "Old Red Lion," on the site of the inn where Pepys stayed. The end one of a row of ten or twelve cottages, at the corner of May's Lane, was once a toll-house.

The work of making the new road, begun in 1823, was not completed until four years later, at a cost of £17,000. A large portion of this heavy sum went in compensation to the Sons of the Clergy Corporation, for land taken. The cost of these improvements came eventually, of course, out of the pockets of travellers along the road. On this Trust they were mulcted severely, for the Trustees, finding the existing tolls to be utterly inadequate to their expenses, obtained

powers in 1830 to increase them. They considered themselves hardly treated in being obliged to undertake such costly works on the eve of the London and Birmingham Railway being constructed—a railway which would have the effect of withdrawing traffic from the road, and reducing receipts at the toll-gates to a minimum ; but the end, although not far off, was not yet, and on the 3rd of July they succeeded in letting the tolls by auction for one year at the handsome sum of £7,530. Accordingly they commenced to pay off their debts, and succeeded in liquidating the whole of them by the beginning of 1842, notwithstanding two successive reductions of tolls in 1835 and 1841.

It was in 1833 that the London and Birmingham Railway obtained its Act, and it was opened throughout on September 7, 1838, the first of the railways which were to contribute to the ruin of Barnet's great coaching and posting trade. The annual takings at Whetstone Gate immediately fell to £1,300, but it lingered on until the Trust expired, November 1, 1863.

It is interesting, as showing the growth of road traffic, to compare the figures still available, giving the annual sums at which the tolls at this gate were let in the old days. Thus, in Queen Elizabeth's time, they were farmed at £40 per annum, and in 1794 they fetched only £150. But few vehicles passed then. Forty years later, no fewer than ninety coaches swept through Whetstone Gate every twenty-four hours !

XIII

Barnet, or Chipping Barnet, or High Barnet, as it is variously called, stands on the summit of a steep and high ridge running east and west. On the east the height of Muswell Hill, now suburban and crowned conspicuously with that unfortunate place of entertainment, the Alexandra Palace, is prominent ; and on the west are Totteridge and the range of hills stretching

away to Elstree. Other Barnets, old and new, are plentiful: East and Friern Barnet, and the modern suburb of New Barnet. Chipping Barnet derives the first part of its name from its ancient chepe, or weekly market, granted by Henry the Second, and its more common prefix of "High," from its situation on the ridge just mentioned.

Barnet was, to many coaching proprietors, the first stage out of London, and the town prospered exceedingly on the coaching and posting traffic of those two great thoroughfares—the Great North Road and the Holyhead Road. When the Stamford "Regent," the York "Highflyer," and the early morning coaches for Shrewsbury, Birmingham, Manchester, or Liverpool arrived, the passengers, who had not found time for breakfast before starting, were generally very sharp-set indeed, and the viands already prepared and waiting in the cosy rooms of the old hostelries, disappeared before their onslaught "in less than no time." The battle of Barnet was fought over again every morning, but they were not men-at-arms who contended together, nor was the subject of their contention the Crown of England. They were just famished travellers who struggled to get something to eat and drink before the guard made his appearance at the door, with the fateful cry, "Time's up, gentlemen; take your seats please." When the horn sounded in the yard, desperate men would rush forth with hands full of food, and finish their repasts as best they might on the coach.

The two principal inns were the "Red Lion" and the "Green Man." It was, and is now in some degree, a town of inns, but these were the headquarters of the two great political parties. Neither was a "coaching" inn, for they despised trafficking with ordinary travellers, and devoted themselves wholly to the posting business. The "Red Lion" was originally the "Antelope." Standing in the most favourable position for intercepting the stream of post-chaises *from* London, it generally secured the pick

HIGH STREET, BARNET.

of business going that way, unless indeed the political bias of gentlemen going down into the country forbade them to hire post-horses at a Tory house. In that case, they went to the "Green Man," further on, which was Whig. And perhaps, in sacrificing to politics, they got inferior horses! The "Green Man" placed in midst of the town, was in receipt of the up traffic, and was the largest establishment, keeping twenty-six pairs of horses and eleven postboys, against the eighteen pairs and eight postboys of the "Red Lion"; and it is recorded that between May 9th and 11th, when, on May 10th, 1808, two celebrated prize-fighters, Gully and Gregson, fought at Beechwood Park, Sir John Sebright's place down the road, near Flamstead, no fewer than one hundred and eighty-seven pairs were changed. Those three days formed a record time for the "Green Man," according to these figures :—

Posting . . .	£141	17	10½
Bills in the house . .	54	19	0
Bills in the yard . .	14	10	0
	£211	6	10½

The "boys" of the "Green Man" wore blue jackets; those of the "Red Lion," yellow jackets and black hats.

An inn called the "Green Man" stands on the site of that busy house, but it is of more recent date than the old Whig headquarters. It may be seen at the fork of roads where the "new" road to St. Albans, driven through the yard of the old "Green Man" in 1826, branches off.

Thus the "Red Lion" remains, long after the eclipse of its rival. Its frontage is impressive by size rather than beauty. With a range of fifteen windows in line, and its fiercely-whiskered red lion balancing himself at the end of a prodigiously long wrought-iron sign, it is eloquent of the old days. The lion turns his

head north, gazing away from the direction in which his chief customers came.

But this white-stuccoed frontage does not hide anything of antiquity, for this is not that original "Red Lion" to which Samuel Pepys resorted. The house he refers to in his diary is the "Old Red Lion"; down the hill, at the approach to Barnet. There he "lay" in 1667. "August 11th, Lord's Day," he writes: "Up by four o'clock . . . and got to the wells at Barnet by seven o'clock, and there found many people a-drinking." After "drinking three glasses and the women nothing," the party sojourned "to the Red Lion, where we 'light and went up into the great room, and there drank, and ate some of the best cheesecakes that ever I ate in my life."

The keenness of the innkeepers who let post-horses during the last few years of the coaching age is scarcely credible. It was a fierce competition. The landlord of the "Red Lion" at Barnet thought nothing of forcibly taking out the post-horses from any private carriage passing his house, and putting in a pair of his own, to do the next stage to St. Albans. This, too, free of charge, in order to prevent the business going to the hated rival. Mine host of that hotel also had his little ways of drawing custom, and gave a glass of sherry and a sandwich, gratis, to the travellers changing there. But things did not end here. The landlord of the "Red Lion," finding, perhaps, that the sherry and sandwich at the "Green Man" was more attractive than his method, engaged a gang of bruisers to pounce upon passing chaises, and even to haul them out of his rival's stable-yard. Evidently a man of wrath, this licensed victualler! After several contests of this kind, the authorities interfered. The combatants were bound over to keep the peace, the punching of conks and bread-baskets, and the tapping of claret ceased, and people travelling down the road were actually allowed to decide for themselves which house they would patronise!

XIV

From Barnet the road runs across Hadley Green, a broad and picturesque expanse, cursed nowadays with the ubiquitous golfer. Here, where the road divides—the Great North Road to the right and the old Holyhead Road to the left—stands the obelisk known as Hadley Highstone, which serves both as a milestone and as a memorial of the great battle of Barnet, fought here on that cold and miserable Easter Day, April 14, 1471, when Edward the Fourth utterly defeated the Lancastrians under the Earl of Warwick, the "King Maker." Warwick fell, and the Red Rose was finally crushed. Hadley Green was then a portion of a wide stretch of unenclosed country known as Gladsmoor Heath, extending up to Monken Hadley church, away on the right. The obelisk was erected by Sir Jeremy Sambrooke in 1740 on the spot where Warwick is said to have been slain. There is, however, another spot which aspires to the honour, at Rabley Park, near South Mimms. This also has its monumental pillar, but without inscription. Among the guileless youth of the neighbourhood it is said to mark "the place where a soldier was knocked down," which is a commonplace way of stating the fact. But who knocked him down, or why, or when, is beyond them when questioned.

Past the lodge gates of Wrotham Park and by Ganwick Corner, where stands the "Duke of York" inn with its bust of that wonderful strategist. He is looking enquiringly south, from his alcove over the front door, as though wondering what has become of all the post-chaises and coaches of old. He is that great commander who managed, according to the well-known rhyme, to march his ten thousand men to the top of a hill and then down again –but he never otherwise distinguished himself—except by the magnitude of his debts.

Potter's Bar marks where the counties of Middlesex and Hertford join. It is not a place of delirious

HADLEY GREEN: SITE OF THE BATTLE OF BARNET.

LIBRARY

delights ; consisting of stuccoed villas fondly supposed to be Italian, and unfinished roads, and streets in a state of suspended animation. Until 1897, when it was pulled down, an old toll-house, the last in a long succession of toll-houses and toll-bars which had stood here from the earliest times and had given Potter's Bar its name, occupied the fork of the roads at the north end of the village, commanding the high-road and the road on the right to Northaw. It was not a beautiful building, but it hinted of old times, and its disappearance is to be regretted. It was

OLD TOLL-HOUSE, POTTER'S BAR.

taken down because already, in the first twelve months of the new automobile era a car had dashed into it and done most of any demolition necessary. A War Memorial now stands on the site. Between this and Hatfield the road goes in undulating fashion, with the Great Northern Railway on the left hand nearly all the way, but chiefly downhill. Down Little Heat Hill and then half-way up the succeeding incline we come to a cutting which affords a newer and easier road than the hilly route to the left. Where this joins

GANWICK CORNER.

old road again, nearly two miles onward, at Bell Bar, stands the pretty "Swan" inn The "bar" has, of course, long since disappeared. Immediately ahead is Hatfield Park, stretching away for over three miles. Through the park, by where the present south lodge stands, the highway used to run in former times, and brought wayfarers between the wind and the nobility of the Cecils. Accordingly the road was diverted at the instance of the then Lord Salisbury, and the public no longer offend him, his heirs, executors, or assigns. And now, for ever and a day, those who use the road between Potter's Bar and Hatfield village must go an extra half mile. This is indeed a free and happy country.

BELL BAR.

Hatfield village touches the extremity of wretchedness, just as Hatfield House marks the apogee of late feudal splendour. And yet, amid its tumbledown hovels there are quaintly beautiful old-gabled cottages with bowed and broken-backed red-tiled roofs, delightful to the artistic eye, if from the builder's and decorator's point of view sadly out of repair. Motor repair-shops and garages, with their squalid advertise-

ments, have helped to ruin Hatfield, and the railway does its share, running closely to the main road, and, with the station directly opposite the highly elaborate modern wrought-iron gates that lead to Hatfield House, detracting not a little from that state of dignified seclusion by which, as we have just seen, a former Marquis of Salisbury set such store. Let us hope his pale ghost does not revisit his old home. If it does, it must be sorely vexed.

But at any rate, that Marquis who was one of Queen Victoria's Prime Ministers, sits there in bronze portrait-effigy. He gazes mournfully, directly at the railway booking-office, as one who has long been waiting, without hope, for a train. It is a fine statue, by Sir George Frampton, R.A., and bears the inscription :—

ROBERT ARTHUR TALBOT,
Marquess of Salisbury, K.G., G.C.V.O.,
Three times Prime Minister of
Great Britain and Ireland,
1830-1903.
Erected to his memory by his Hertfordshire friends and neighbours in recognition of a great life devoted to the welfare of his country.

Hatfield House, that great historical museum and ancient repository of State secrets, is little seen from the village, nor have we, as wayfarers along the road, much to do with it. It is by the parish church, its characteristic Hertfordshire extinguisher spire so prominent above the tumbled roofs of Hatfield, that we may glimpse the older parts of the house. In that church lies its builder, the great Robert Cecil, his effigy, with the Lord Treasurer's wand of office, recumbent on a slab uplifted by statues emblematic of Fortitude, Justice, Prudence, and Temperance, and a skeleton below, to show that even Lord Treasurers, possessed though they be of all the virtues, are mortal, like less exalted and less virtuous men.

The house that he built seems sadly out of repair. The history of it is romantic to a degree. Originally the palace of the Bishops of Ely, whose delicate

constitutions could not stand the fen-land vapours which enwrapped the neighbourhood of their glorious Cathedral (but perhaps were not harmful to the less dignified clergy !), it remained in their possession until it was coveted by Henry the Eighth, who gave some land at Ely in exchange. So the bishops had, doubtless with an ill grace, to go back to that fertile breeding-ground of agues and rheumatism, and one can well imagine the resident inferior clergy, between their aches and pains, chuckling secretly about this piece of poetic justice.

And so in Royal possession the old palace continued until James the First in his turn exchanged it for the estate of Sir Robert Cecil at Theobalds. Previously it had been the home—the prison, rather—of the Princess Elizabeth during her sister Mary's reign. The oak is still shown in the park under which she was sitting when the news of Mary's death and the end, consequently, of the surveillance to which she was subjected, was brought her, November 17, 1588. (But is tradition truthful here ? Would she have been sitting under an oak in November ?) "It is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes," she exclaimed, quoting from the Psalms. Three days later she held her first council in the old palace, and then on the 23rd set out for London.

There are relics of the great queen at Hatfield House : a pair of her stockings and the garden hat she was wearing when the great news came to her. But the house is nearly all of a later date, for when Sir Robert Cecil obtained it in exchange for Theobalds, he pulled down the greater part of the old palace and built the present striking Jacobean building, magnificent and impressive, and perhaps not the less impressive for being also somewhat gloomy. This is no place to recount the glories of its picture-galleries and its noble state-rooms, or of the long line of the exalted and the great who have been entertained here. Moreover, the great are not uncommonly the dullest of dull dogs. It is rather with those of less estate,

and with travellers, that in these pages we shall find our account. Pepys, for instance, whom we need not object to call the natural man (for does not Scripture tell us that the human heart in a natural state is "desperately wicked"? and Samuel was no Puritan), who was here lusting to steal somebody's dog, as he acknowledged in that very outspoken *Diary* of his :— "Would fain have stolen a pretty dog that followed me, but could not, which troubled me."

There was a tragical happening at Hatfield, November 27, 1835, when the house was greatly injured by fire, and the old and eccentric Dowager Marchioness of Salisbury burnt to death, in her eighty-fifth year. The pious declared it to be a "judgment" for her playing cards on Sunday; but what a number of conflagrations we should have if that were true and Providence consistent in its vengeance!

XV

Leaving Hatfield and its memories behind, we come, past the tree-shaded hamlet of Stanborough, to the long gradual rise of Digswell Hill, beautifully engineered over the uplands rising from the marshy banks of the little river Lea. Off to the left, at the foot of the hill, goes the old road at a wide tangent, and with a decidedly abrupt plunge down into the water-meadows, crossing the Lea by Lemsford Mills, and rejoining the newer road on an equally abrupt and difficult rise half-way up the hill, by the wall of Brockett Hall Park. It was here that Brickwall turnpike gate was situated in the old days. The brick wall of the park that gave the gate its name is still there—and a very old, substantial, and beautifully lichened red-brick wall it is—but the gate and the toll-board and the toll-house have all vanished. Digswell Hill is beautiful, and so is Ayot Green, at the summit, with its giant trees and humble cottages stretching away on the left to the Ayot

villages. Not so the "Red Lion" close by. More beautiful still—and steeper—is the descent into Welwyn, beneath over-arching trees and rugged banks, down from which secluded rustic summer-houses look upon the traffic of the highway.

Welwyn lies in a deep hollow on the little river—or, more correctly speaking, the streamlet—of the Mimram. Street and houses face you alarmingly as you descend the steep hillside, wondering (if you cycle) if the sharp corner can safely be rounded, or if you must needs dash through door or window of the "White Hart," once one of the two coaching inns of the village.

The "White Hart" at Welwyn was kept in the "twenties" by "old Barker," who horsed the Stamford "Regent" a stage on the road, and was, in the language of the coachmen, a "three-cornered old beggar." That is to say, he kept a tight hand over the doings of coachmen and guards, did not approve of "shouldering," and objected to the coachmen giving lessons to gentlemen coachmen, or allowing amateurs to "take the ribbons." From the passengers' point of view this was entirely admirable of "old Barker," for many an inoffensive traveller's life had been jeopardised by the driving of unqualified persons. Colonel Birch Reynardson tells a story of him and of Tom Hennesy, the best known of the "Regent" coachmen—one who could whistle louder, hit a horse harder, and tell a bigger lie than any of his contemporaries. Hennesy had resigned the reins to him one day between London and Hatfield, but when they neared Welwyn, the accomplished Tom thought he had better resume them. "It would never do for old Barker to see you driving," said he. The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the "three-cornered old beggar" himself appeared, walking up the hill, with the double object of taking a constitutional and of seeing if any "shouldering" was going on.

"Don't look as if you seed him," said Tom. "We'll make the best of it we can."

WELWYN.

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Down they went to the inn door, where the fresh team was standing. By the time the horses had been got out of the coach, old Barker, who had turned back, looking anything but pleasant, was upon them.

"Good morning, Mr. Barker, sir," said Tom, with all the impudence he could command. "Did you ever see a young gentleman take a coach steadier down a hill? 'Pon my word, sir, he could not have done it better. He's a pupil of mine, sir, and I'm blessed if he did not do it capital: don't you think he did, sir, for you seed him?" "Hum," said old Barker; "you know it's all against the laws. Supposing anything happened, what then?" "Well, sir, I did not expect anything *could* happen, with such horses as these of yours: there's no better four horses, sir, betwixt London and Stamford; and as for those wheelers, why, they'll hold anything." This, of course, was pouring balm into old Barker's wounds, which seemed to heal pretty quickly, and he put on a pleasanter face, and said, "Well, Hennesy, you know I don't like 'gentlemen coachmen,' and, above all things, very *young* ones. Don't you do it again."

Was Hennesy grateful? Not at all: for, when they had driven away, he said, "Well, he was wonderful civil for *him*," and added that if he could only catch him lying drunk in the road, he would run over his neck and kill him, "blessed if he wouldn't!"

This bold and independent fellow, like many another coachman, came down in the world when railways drove the coaches off the main roads, and was reduced to driving a pair-horse coach between Cambridge and Huntingdon.

More picturesque than the "White Hart" is the "Wellington," which composes so finely with the red-brick tower of the church, at the further end of the village street, where the road abruptly forks. It is a street of all kinds and sizes of houses, mostly old and pleasingly grouped.

But Welwyn has other claims upon the tourist. It was the home for many years of Young, author

of the once-popular *Night Thoughts*. Who reads that sombre work now? He was rector here from 1730 until 1765, when he died, but lives as a warning to those who inevitably identify an author with his books. His work, *The Complaint, or, Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality*, is dour reading, but he was so little of a sombre man that we find him not infrequently in the company of, and a fellow spirit among, the convivial men of his time. This was only a product of his "sensibility," that curious quality peculiar to the eighteenth century, and did not necessarily prove him a weeping philosopher. He had, indeed, a mental agility which could with ease fly from the most depressing disquisitions on the silent tomb, to the proper compounding of a stiff jorum of punch. Young, on his appointment to Welwyn, married Lady Elizabeth ("Betty") Lee, daughter of the Earl of Lichfield. He found the rectory too small (or perhaps not good enough for her ladyship), and so purchased a more imposing house called the "Guessons"—anciently the "Guest House" of some abbey. With it he bought land, and planted the lime-tree avenue which still remains a memorial of him. There is a votive urn here, erected by Mr. Johnes-Knight, a succeeding rector; but probably the most enduring memorial of Young is the very first line of the *Night Thoughts*, the fine expression :—

"Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep."

No one reads Young nowadays, and so every one who sees this, one of the most hackneyed of quotations, ascribes it to Shakespeare. Alas, poor Young!

Young erected a sundial in his garden here, with the motto, "*Eheu, fugaces!*" "Alas, how fleeting!" It was not long before some midnight robbers came, and, carrying it off, justified the inscription. Nowadays, besides the avenue and the votive urn, all that remains to tell of him is the tablet to his memory on the south wall of the aisle.

Knebworth Park, with mansion and an ancient parish church full of monuments to Strodes, Robinsons and Lyttons, is just off to the left. There is no Lytton blood in the Earls "of" Lytton, who are not of Litton, near Tideswell, in Derbyshire, whence came the now extinct Lytton family. The whole assumption is romantic rather than warranted by facts.

Knebworth is a place of much combined beauty and historic interest, together with a great deal of vulgar and uninteresting sham. It has been described as "a sham-old house, with a sham lake, sham heraldic monsters, and sham-ancient portraits." Bulwer, the first Lord Lytton —"Bulwig, as someone, to his intense annoyance, called him —was intensely fond of Gothic architecture and ornamentation; fond of it in an undiscriminating, Early Victorian, uninstructed way, and he stuck his house of Knebworth all over with gimcrackery that he fondly thought to be mediaeval. Crockets, tourelles, pinnacles and grotesque gargoyles were added in wholesale fashion, and in a very carpenterish way. One might almost say they were *wafered* on. They were not carved out of stone, but moulded cheaply in plaster, and in his son's time were always falling. As they fell, they were relegated to the nearest dustheap, and their places remained vacant. A visitor to the second Lord Lytton tells, apropos of these things, how he was walking on the terrace with his host, when the gardener came up and said, "If you please, my lord, another of them bloody monkeys has fallen down in the night." It was, of course, one more of "Bulwig's" quasi-Gothic abominations come to its doom.

The Earls Lytton are neither baronial Bulwers nor ancient lordly Lyttons. Their real name is the very much more plebian one of Wiggett. So far back as 1756, William Wiggett assumed the name of Bulwer on his marriage with a Sarah of that ilk. His youngest son, the novelist, the child of another wife, who had been an Elizabeth Warburton, added the name of Lytton to his own on succeeding to his mother's property of Knebworth.

But that does not at once bring us to the Lytton connection. For that, we must quote the late Augustus J. C. Hare, who was an adept at relationships to the remotest degree. He had hundreds of cousins of his own, and knew who was everybody else's twentieth or thirtieth cousin. He tells us that this Elizabeth Warburton's very remote connection with the real Lyttons lay in the fact that "her grandfather, John Robinson, was cousin (maternally) to Lytton Strode, who was great-nephew of a Sir William Lytton, who died childless in 1704." It will be allowed that the connection *is* remote; practically indeed, non-existent.

Nor is the name of Bulwer as distinguished as the novelist wished it to appear. He sought to range it with Bölver, one of the war-titles of the Norse god, Odin; but it really derived from some plebian cattle-driver, or Bullward.

The road rises steeply out of Welwyn, in the direction of Stevenage. Here some of the coaches had a narrow escape from destruction at the hands of unknown miscreants, ancestors of the criminal lunatics who place obstacles upon the railways in our times. Our murderous larrikins had their counterparts in the old days, in those who placed gates across the roads, so that the coaches should run into them in the darkness. An incident of this kind happened here on the night of June 5, 1805, when two gates were found set up in the main road, and another at Welwyn Green. Fortunately, no accident resulted, and the ruffians, who doubtless were waiting the result of their work, must have gone home disappointed.

From the beautiful expanse of gorsy and wooded hillside common above the village may be glimpsed the great red-brick viaduct of Welwyn, carrying the main line of the Great Northern Railway across the wide and deep valley of the Mimram, an insignificant stream for such a channel. Woolmer Green and Broadwater, between this point and Stevenage, are modern and uninteresting hamlets, created out of nothingness by the speculative builder and the handy

situation of Knebworth station, beside the road, which now begins to give another example of its flatness.

Leisurely wayfarers will notice the old half-timbered cottage at the entrance to the churchyard. On its side wall are hung two stout long poles with formidable hooks attached. These are old fire-appliances, used in the days of thatched roofs, for pulling off the whole of the blazing thatch. Travellers, leisured or otherwise, will scarce be able to miss seeing the great and offensive boards hereabouts, advertising a new suburban or "Garden Suburb" settlement in course of building away to the right, since 1920; blessed and boomed by Lord Northcliffe, and apparently to be given the name of "Daily Mail." Horrible!

The entrance to Stevenage is signalised by a group of new and commonplace cottages elbowing the famous Six Hills, a series of sepulchral barrows of prehistoric date, beside the highway. These six grassy mounds might not unreasonably be passed unthinkingly by the uninstructed, or taken for grass-grown heaps of refuse. Centuries of wear and weather have had their effect, and they do not look very monumental now; but they were once remarkable enough to give the place its name, Stevenage deriving from the Saxon "*stigenhaght*," or "hills by the highway."

To coachmen, who were adepts in the art of what the slangy call "spooling," and were always ready—in earlier slang phrase—to "take a rise out of" strangers, the Six Hills afforded an excellent opportunity of practising a diluted form of wit, and often brought them a glass of brandy or rum-and-milk at the next pull-up, in payment of the bets they would make with the most innocent-looking passenger, that he could not tell which two of the hills were furthest apart. They are, as nearly as possible, equi-distant; but strangers would select one couple or another, according to their fancy; whereupon the coachman would triumphantly point out that the first and the last were, as a matter of fact, the most widely divided. This

THE "SIX HILLS," STEVENAGE.

perhaps does not exhibit coaching wit in a strikingly robust light; but a very weak kind of jocularity served to pass the weary hours of travel in our grandfathers' days.

XVI

Stevenage is the first of the many wide-streeted towns and villages whose emptiness proclaims the something missing that was provided for by all this vast roominess. Its one street, lining the old road, was originally laid out so spaciously for the purpose of affording room for the traffic for which, once upon a time, it was not too spacious. It is all too wide now that the intercourse of two nations proceeds by rail, and many of the old inns that once did so famous a trade are converted into private residences. Prominent among them was the "Swan," which may now be sought in the large red-brick house on the right-hand side of the forking roads, as the town is left for Baldock. It may readily be identified by its archway, which formerly led to the spacious stables.

The "Swan" at Stevenage, kept in pre-railway days by a postmaster named Cass, was one of those exclusive houses which, like the "Red Lion" and the "Green Man" at Barnet, did not condescend to the ordinary coach-traveller. Cass kept post-horses only, and his customers ranged from princes and dukes down to baronets and wealthy knights.

"Posting in all its branches," as the postmaster used to say in the announcements outside their establishments, was at the beginning of the nineteenth century essentially aristocratic; but it had many changes, from its beginning, about the dawn of the seventeenth century, to its end, before the middle of the nineteenth. Originally "posting" meant the use of horses only, and the traveller rode horse and himself, accompanied perhaps by a mounted groom

Thus Fynes Morison, in his *Itinerary*, published in 1617, speaks of the early days of posting:—"In England, towards the south, and in the west parts, and from London to Barwick upon the confines of Scotland, post-horses are established at every ten miles or thereabouts, which they ride a false gallop after some ten miles an hour sometimes, and that makes their hire the greater; for with a commission from the chief postmaster or chiefe lords of the councell (given either upon publike businesse, or at least pretence thereof), a passenger shall pay twopence halfpenny each mile for his horse, and as much for his guide's horse; but one guide will serve the whole company, though many ride together, who may easily bring back the horses, driving them before him, who 'know the waye as well as a beggar knowes his dishe.' This extraordinary charge of horses' hire may well be recompenced with the speede of the journey, whereby greater expences in the innes are avoided; all the difficultie is, to have a body able to endure the toyle. For these horses the passenger is at no charge to give them meat onely at the ten miles, and the boy that carries them backe will expect some few pence in gift."

When carriages were introduced, the very great personages of the realm "progressed" in them, and had their love of display gratified thereby. But what they gained in pomp they lost in speed, for at the best of it they rarely travelled at a greater pace than seven miles an hour.

An odd institution with the noble and the wealthy families of that bygone age was the "running footman." It has sometimes been supposed that these deer-footed servitors were for town service, perhaps because "old Q," the profligate Marquis of Queensberry, who was the last to keep one, lived in town during his last years and necessarily kept his lackey running London streets. The unique sign of the "running footman," with the portrait of such an one in costume, is also in London, and may be seen any

day on a little public-house, still chiefly frequented by men-servants, in Charles Street, Berkeley Square. He wears a uniform consisting of blue coat and breeches, trimmed with gold lace. Round his waist is a red sash, on his head a cap with a nodding plume, and in his hand the long staff carried by all his tribe. This is an outfit somewhat different from that usually worn, for we are told that they wore no breeches, but a short silk petticoat kept down by a deep gold fringe.

The function of a running footman was to run ahead of his employer's carriage, to point out the proper turnings to take, or to arrange for his reception at the inns; but as time went on and accommodation increased, he was not of any practical use, and became simply a kind of unnecessary fore-runner, who by his appearance advertised the coming of my lord and upheld my lord's dignity. It is said that these ministers to senseless pomp and vanity usually ran at the rate of seven miles an hour, and frequently did sixty miles a day. The long and highly ornamented staff they carried had a hollow silver ball at the end containing white wine. Unscrewing it, the footman could refresh himself. More white wine, mixed with eggs, was given him at the end of his journey, and he must have needed it! Over the bad and hilly roads of a hundred and fifty years ago, the running footman could readily keep ahead of a carriage; on the flat the horses, of course, had the advantage.

Post-chaises were unknown in England until after the middle of the eighteenth century had come and gone. Thus we find Horace Walpole and Gray, taking the "grand tour" together in 1739, astonished to laughter at the post-chaises which conveyed them from Boulogne towards Paris. This French vehicle, the father of all post-chaises, was two-wheeled, and not very unlike our present hansom-cab, the door being in front and the body hung in much the same way, only a little more forward from the wheels. The French *chaise de-poste* was invented in 1664, and the first used in England were of this type; but they

proved unsuitable for use in this country, and English carriage-builders at length evolved the well-known post-chaise, which went out only with the coaching age. But it was long before it began to supplant the post-horses and the feminine pillion.

Every one is familiar with the appearance of the old post-chaise, which, according to the painters and the print-sellers, appears to have been used principally for the purpose of spiriting love-lorn couples with the speed of the wind away from all restrictions of home and the Court of Chancery. A post-chaise was (so it seems nowadays) a rather cumbrous affair, four-wheeled, high, and insecurely hung, with a glass front and a seat to hold three, facing the horses. The original designers evidently had no prophetic visions as to this especial popularity of post-chaises with errant lovers, nor did they ponder the proverb, "Two's company, three's none," else they would have restricted their accommodation to two, or have enlarged it to four.

It was an expensive as well as a pleasant method of travelling, costing as it did at least a shilling a mile, and, in times when forage was dear, one shilling and threepence. The usual rates were chaise, ninepence a mile, pair of post-horses, sixpence; four horses and chaise, supposing you desired to travel speedily—say at twelve miles an hour—one-and-ninepence. But these costs and charges did not frank the traveller through. The post-boy's tip was as inevitable as night and morning. Likewise there were the "gates" to pay every now and again. One shudders to contemplate the total cost of posting from London to Edinburgh, even with only the ordinary equipment of two horses. There were thirty post-stages between the two capitals, according to the books published for the use of travellers a hundred years ago. Those books were very necessary to any one who did not desire to be charged for perhaps a mile more on each stage than it really measured, which was one of those artful postmasters' little ways. Here is a list of these stages with the measurements, to

which travellers drew the attention of those post-masters who commonly endeavoured to overcharge :—

	Miles	Furlongs		Miles	Furlongs
Barnet . .	11	0	York . .	9	3
Hatfield .	8	4	Easingwold .	13	3
Stevenage .	11	7	Thirsk . .	10	3
Biggleswade .	13	5	Northallerton .	9	0
Buckden .	15	7	Darlington .	16	0
Stilton . .	13	7	Durham .	18	2
Stamford .	14	2	Newcastle .	14	4
Witham Common	11	2	Morpeth .	14	6
Grantham .	9	5	Alnwick .	18	6
Newark .	14	3	Belford . .	14	5
Tuxford .	13	2	Berwick .	15	3
Barnby Moor	10	4	Press Inn .	11	5
Doncaster .	12	0	Dunbar .	14	3
Ferrybridge .	15	2	Haddington .	11	0
Tadcaster .	12	7	Edinburgh .	16	0

Nearly four hundred miles by these measurements. This, at a shilling a mile for the posting, gives £20 ; but, including the postboys' tips, "gates," and expenses at the inns on the road, the journey could not have been done in this way under £30, at the most modest calculation. This list of post-stages was one drawn up for distances chiefly between the towns, but nothing is more remarkable along the Great North Road than the number of old posting-houses which still exist (although of course their business is gone) in wild and lonely spots, far removed from either town or village.

Another "branch" of posting was the horsing alone, by which a private carriage could be taken to or from town by hiring posters at every stage. This was a favourite practice with the gentry of the shires, who thus had all the *éclat* of travelling in private state, without the expense and trouble of providing their own horses. It is probably of this method that De Quincey speaks in the following passage :—

"In my childhood," says he, "standing with one or two of my brothers and sisters at the front window

of my mother's carriage, I remember one unvarying set of images before us. The postillion (for so were all carriages then driven) was employed, not by fits and starts, but always and eternally, in quartering, *i.e.* in crossing from side to side, according to the casualties of the ground. Before you stretched a wintry length of lane, with ruts deep enough to fracture the leg of a horse, filled to the brim with standing pools of rain-water; and the collateral chambers of these ruts kept from becoming confluent by thin ridges, such as the Romans called *lirae*, to maintain the footing upon which *lirae*, so as not to swerve (or as the Romans would say, *delirare*), was a trial of some skill, both for the horses and their postillion. It was, indeed, next to impossible for any horse, on such a narrow crust of separation, not to grow *delirious* in the Roman metaphor; and the nervous anxiety which haunted me when a child was much fed by this image so often before my eyes, and the sympathy with which I followed the motion of the docile creatures' legs. Go to sleep at the beginning of a stage, and the last thing you saw—wake up, and the first thing you saw—was the line of wintry pools, the poor off-horse planting his steps with care, and the cautious postillion gently applying his spur whilst manœuvring across the system of grooves with some sort of science that looked like a gipsy's palmistry—so equally unintelligible to me were his motions in what he sought and in what he avoided."

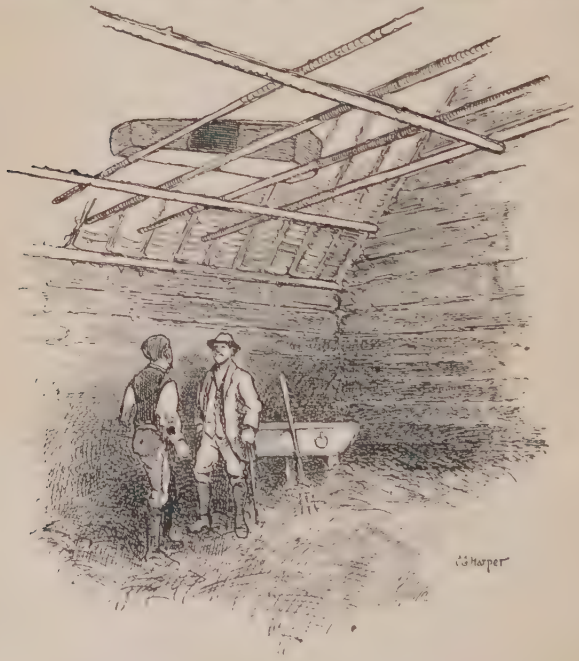
XVII

Before we leave Stevenage, we must pay a visit to the "Old Castle" inn, in whose stable the body of the eccentric Henry Trigg is deposited, in a coffin amid the rafters, plain for all to see; somewhat dilapidated and battered in the lapse of two centuries, and with a patch of tin over the hole cut in it by some riotous

blades long ago, but doubtless still containing his bones. His Will sufficiently explains the circumstances.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN.

I, HENRY TRIGG, of Stevenage, in the County of Hertford, Grocer, being very infirm and weak in body, but of perfect sound mind and memory, God be praised for it, calling into mind the mortality of my body, do now make and ordain this my last Will and Testament, in writing, hereafter following: that is to say:—Principally I recommend my soul into the merciful hands of Almighty God that first gave me it, assuredly believing and only expecting free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins, and eternal life in and through the only merits, death, and passion of Jesus Christ my Saviour; and as to my body I commit it to the



TRIGG'S COFFIN.

West end of my Hovel, to be decently laid there upon a floor erected by my Executor, upon the purlin, for the same purpose ; nothing doubting but at the general Resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God ; and as for and concerning such worldly substance as it hath pleased God to bless me with in this world, I do devise and dispose of the same in manner and form here following.

Imprimis. I give and devise unto my loving brother Thomas Trigg, of Letchworth, in the County of Hertford, Clerk, and to his Heirs and Assigns for ever, all those my Freehold Lands lying dispersedly in the several common fields in the parish of Stevenage aforesaid, and also all my Copyhold Lands, upon condition that he shall lay my body upon the place before mentioned ; and also all that Messuage, Cottage, or Tenement at Redcoats Green in the Parish of Much Wymondly, together with those Nine Acres of Land (more or less) purchased of William Hale and Thomas Hale, Jun. ; and also my Cottage, Orchard, and Barn, with four acres of Land (more or less) belonging, lying, and being in the Parish of Little Wymondly, and now in the possession of Samuel Kitchener, labourer ; and all my Cottages, Messuages, or Tenements situate and being in Stevenage, aforesaid : or, upon condition that he shall pay my brother, George Trigg, the sum of Ten Pounds per annum for life : but if my brother shall neglect or refuse to lay my body where I desire it should be laid, then, upon that condition, I will and bequeath all that which I have already bequeathed to my brother Thomas Trigg, unto my brother George Trigg, and to his heirs for ever ; and if my brother George Trigg should refuse to lay my body under my Hovel, then what I have bequeathed unto him, as all my Lands and Tenements. I lastly bequeath them unto my nephew William Trigg and his heirs for ever, upon his seeing that my body is decently laid up there as aforesaid.

Item. I give and bequeath unto my nephew William Trigg, the sum of *Five Pounds*, at the age of Thirty years ; to his sister Sarah the sum of *Twenty Pounds ;* to his sister Rose the sum of *Twenty Pounds ;* and lastly to his sister Ann the sum of *Twenty Pounds ;* all at the age of Thirty Years : to John Spencer, of London, Butcher, the sum of *One Guinea ;* and to Solomon Spencer, of Stevenage, the sum of *One Guinea*, Three Years next after my decease ; to

my cousin Henry Kimpton, *One Guinea*, One Year next after my decease, and another *Guinea* Two Years after my decease; to William Waby, *Five Shillings*; and to Joseph Priest, *Two Shillings and Sixpence*, Two Years after my decease; to my tenant Robert Wright the sum of *Five Shillings*, Two years next after my decease; and to Ralph Lowd and John Reeves, *One Shilling* each, Two Years next after my decease.

Item. All the rest of my Goods and Chattels, and personal Estate, and Ready Money, I do hereby give and devise unto my brother Thomas Trigg, paying my debts and laying my body where I would have it laid; whom I likewise make and ordain my full and sole Executor of this my last Will and Testament, or else to them before mentioned; ratifying and confirming this and no other to be my last Will and Testament, in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this Twenty-eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Twenty-four

HENRY TRIGG.

Read, signed, sealed, and declared by the said Henry Trigg, the Testator, to be his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us who have subscribed our names as witnesses hereto, in the presence of the said Testator.

JOHN HAWKINS, Sen.

JOHN HAWKINS, Jun.

× The mark of WILLIAM SEXTON.

Proved in the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, the 15th day of October, 1724, by the Executor Thomas Trigg.

The inn-signs of Stevenage afford some exercise for the contemplative mind. As the town is approached from London, the sign of "Our Mutual Friend" appears, nearly opposite a domestic Gothic building of red and white brick, originally a home for decayed authors, founded by Charles Dickens and the first Lord Lytton. The decayed authors did not take kindly to the scheme. Perhaps they did not like being

patronised by authors of better fortunes than their own. The institution was a failure, and the building is now put to other uses. No doubt the sign of "Our Mutual Friend" derives from those times when Dickens and Lytton foregathered here and at Knebworth. At quite the other end of the town appears the obviously new sign of the "Lord Kitchener," almost opposite that of another military hero, the "Marquis of Granby."

Passing through the little old-world village of Graveley, succeeded by the beautifully graded rise and fall of Lannock Hill, we come into the town of Baldock, with its great church prominent in front, and its empty streets running in puzzling directions. It was at Baldock that Charles the First, being conducted as a prisoner to London, was offered wine in one of the sacramental vessels by the vicar, Josias Byrd, and it was on the road outside the town, near where the old turnpike gate stood, that the Newcastle wagon, on its way to London, was plundered of £500 in coin by three mounted highwaymen, on a February morning in 1737.

Our old friend Mr. Samuel Pepys, journeying on August 6th, 1661, from Brampton, came into Baldock, and stayed the night, at some inn not specified. He says, "Took horse for London, and with much ado got to Baldwick. There lay, and had a good supper by myself. The landlady being a pretty woman, but I durst not take notice of her, her husband being there."

Always some spoil-sport in the way!

Baldock, from its stunted extinguisher spire to its fine old brick houses and nodding plaster cottages, is characteristically Hertfordshire. Among other things of general interest, it has a row of almshouses, duly inscribed :—

> "Theis Almes Howses are
> the gieft of Mr. Iohn Wynne
> cittezen of London, Latelye
> Deceased, who hath left a
> Yearcley stipend to everey
> poore of either howses to
> the Worldes End. September
> Anno Domini 1621."

The worthy citizen reckoned without the Charity Commissioners, who may confidently be expected to propound a "scheme" some day long anterior to the final crash, by which his wishes will be entirely disregarded.

Away to the left of Baldock will be noticed a new town, and the factory chimneys of it. This is Letchworth, the "Garden City," developed out of Letchworth, the little village of old. This "First Garden City," founded in 1902, on a nominal capital of £300,000 actual £125,000, by the Garden City Association, itself founded in June, 1899, with a capital of about thirty shillings, represents a passionate quest of the ideal life on a 5 per cent. basis of profit. The problem of how to create an earthly paradise (plus industrial factories) was here to be tackled. The beginnings of such things are always the most charming; and Letchworth began ideally. But the factories and

AT THE 39TH MILE.

the five per cent. always have a way of overcoming ideals; and we shall see.

The stone outside Baldock, marking the thirty-ninth mile is milestone and upping-block as well.

Midway between Baldock and Biggleswade, at Topler's Hill, the Bedfordshire border is crossed. We may perhaps be excused if we pass Topler's Hill unwittingly, for the rises called "hills" on the Great North Road would generally pass unnoticed elsewhere. Biggleswade town and neighbourhood are interested wholly in cabbages and potatoes and other highly necessary, but essentially unromantic, vegetables. The surrounding country is in spring and summer one vast market-garden; at other times it is generally a lake of equal vastness, for the Ivel and the Ouse, that run so sluggishly through the flat lands, arise then in their might and submerge fields and roads for miles around.

As for Biggleswade itself, it is a town with an extraordinarily broad and empty market-place, a church with a spire of the Hertfordshire type, and two old coaching inns—the "White Swan" and the "Crown"—facing one another in an aggressive rivalry at a narrow outlet of the market-place. The "White Swan" was the inn at which the up "Regent" coach dined. It was kept at that time by a man named Crouch, "that long, sour old beggar," in the words of Tom Hennesy. Here "the process of dining on a really cold day in winter," to quote Colonel Birch Reynardson, "was carried on under no small amount of difficulty. Your hands were frozen, your feet were frozen, your very mouth felt frozen, and in fact you felt frozen all over. Sometimes, with all this cold, you were also wet through, your hat wet through, your coat wet through, the large wrapper that was meant to keep your neck warm and dry wet through, and, in fact, you were wet through yourself to your very bones. Only twenty minutes were allowed for dinner; and by the time you had got your hands warm enough to be able to untie your neck wrapper, and had got out of your great-coat, which, being wet, clung tenaciously to you, the time for feeding was half gone. By the time you had got one quarter of what you could have consumed, had your mouth been in eating trim and

your hands warm enough to handle your knife and fork, the coachman would put his head in, and say : " Now, gentlemen, if you please ; the coach is ready." After this summons, having struggled into your wet great-

BIGGLESWADE.

coat, bound your miserable wet wrapper round your miserable cold throat, having paid your two and sixpence for the dinner that you had the will, but not the time, to eat, with sixpence for the waiter, you wished the worthy Mr. Crouch good day, grudged him the half-crown he had pocketed for having dined so miserably, and again mounted your seat, to be rained and snowed upon, and almost frozen to death before you reached London."

Leaving Biggleswade, the Ivel is crossed and Tingey's Corner passed. Tingey's Corner marks the junction of the old alternative route from Welwyn, by Hitchin to Lower Codicote, the route adopted by record-breaking cyclists. The hamlets of Lower Codicote and Beeston Green open up a view of Sandy,

away to the right, with its range of yellow sand-hills running for some three miles parallel with the road, and seeming the more impressive by reason of the dead level on which they look. The canal-like, bare banks of the Ivel are passed again at Girtford, and the road-side cottages of Tempsford reached; the village and church lying off to the left, where the Ouse and the Ivel come to their sluggish confluence, and form a waterway which once afforded marauding Danes an excellent route from the coast up to Bedford. Even now the remains of a fortification they constructed to command this strategic point are visible, and bear the name of the "Dannicke"; that is to say, the "Danes' work," or perhaps the "Danes' wick," "wick" meaning "village."

An infinitely later work—Tempsford turnpike-gate, to wit—has disappeared a great deal more effectively than those ancient entrenchments, and the way is clear and flat, not to say featureless, over the Ouse, past the outlying houses of Wyboston, and so into Little End, the most southerly limit of Eaton Socon.

XVIII

Past Tempsford some of the coaches, notably the Stamford "Regent," turned off into the loop road by St. Neots and Huntingdon. In the winter time, or when the spring rains were falling, they did this at some risk, for the low-lying land by the river Ouse was often awash. Two old ladies were on one occasion given a terrible fright, the road being deeply flooded and the water coming into the coach, so that they had to stand on the seats. They quite thought they were going to be drowned, and perhaps they *would* have been had the "Regent" been driven by one unused to the road. Had the coachman driven into a ditch—as he might easily have done with the floods covering all the landmarks—it would have been "all up" with

the "insides" for certain and perhaps for the "outsides" as well.

The most prudent coachmen in winter time kept to the main road, which lies somewhat higher, and passed through Eaton Socon. Once—to judge by its name—a place of importance, this is now only a long village of one straggling street. At some undetermined period the head of a "soke," or separate legal jurisdiction, all memories of the dignity implied are gone, save only the empty title, which Dickens makes fun of by calling the village in *Nicholas Nickleby* "Eton Slocomb." The "White Horse," a picturesque roadside inn, may be looked upon with interest by those keen on identifying Dickens landmarks. In later days it became a favourite resort of the North Road Cycling Club, and witnessed the beginning and ending of many a road race in the "eighties" and early "nineties," when such things were.

The story of the London to York cycling record is fitly to be told in this page. It is not so long a tale as that of the famous one from London to Brighton and back, but it stands for greater efforts and for a vast amount of pluck and endurance. There have been those unsportsmanlike souls who, not finding sport an end in itself, have questioned the use of record making and breaking. But it has had its use, and even from this point of view has amply justified itself, for the continually increasing speed required out of cycles for these purposes has led to the perfecting of them within what is, after all, a comparatively short time; so that the sporting clubman has, after all, while strictly occupied within the range of his own ambitions, contributed to the general good by bringing about the manufacture of a vehicle which, used by many hundreds of thousands of people who never raced in their lives, and are probably incapable of a speed of more than twelve miles an hour, has brought the roads and lanes of the country within the knowledge of many to whom rural life was something new and strange.

The first recorded cycle ride to York in which

speed was an object was that of C. Wheaton, September 1872. That pioneer took two days to perform the journey, making Stamford, a distance of eighty-nine miles, the end of his first day's adventure, in 15½ hours, and on the second day reaching York in a further 26 hours 40 minutes: total, 42 hours 10 minutes. This, with the front-driving low cycle of those days, was an achievement. Wooden wheels and iron tyres did not conduce to either speed or ease, and that now historic figure, painfully *crawling* (as we should now think his progress) to York is heroic.

Perhaps this tale of hardship was calculated to deter others from trying their mettle, but at any rate it was not until July 9, 1874, that two others, Ian Keith-Falconer and J. H. Stanley Thorpe, followed, and they failed in the effort. After another two years had almost passed, on June 5, 1876, Thorpe made another attempt. Leaving Highgate Archway at 11.10 P.M., he arrived the next day at York at 9.40 P.M.=22 hours 30 minutes; chiefly, of course, by favour of that then "improved" form of bicycle, the tall "ordinary."

Thirteen years passed before this record was lowered, and the one that replaced it was not a remarkable performance, considering the further great improvements in cycles. This ride, in the summer of 1889, performed on a solid-tyred "safety," took 21 hours 10 minutes, and was beaten in the same year by six minutes by H. R. Pope, riding a tricycle; himself displaced, shortly after, by F. T. Bidlake, also mounted on a tricycle, who did the 197 miles in 18 hours 28 minutes.

In 1890, and for several years following, records came and went with increasing rapidity. In 1890 J. M. James put the safety record at 16 hours 52 minutes, and T. A. Edge soon followed, reducing it to 14 hours 33 minutes, James regaining the record again in 1891 by a bare thirteen minutes. In the following year, S. F. Edge, on a front-driving safety, made a splendid record of 12 hours 49 minutes, but

had the mortification to see it beaten the next day, June 27, by F. W. Shorland, in 39 minutes less. In this year there were several rival tricycle records: that of W. J. A. Butterfield, of 18 hours 9 minutes being lowered by F. T. Bidlake by nearly three hours, and beaten again, on September 29, Bidlake's figures on this occasion being 13 hours 19 minutes. On the same day M. A. Holbein and F. W. Shorland rode to York on a tandem tricycle in exactly the same time.

C. C. Fontaine went for the safety record on August 29, 1894, when he put the figures down to 11 hours 51 minutes. Fontaine lowered his own record in the following year, on October 18, by 21 minutes 45 seconds, and this was disposed of by George Hunt on May 7, 1896, when he got well within the eleven hours, at 10 hours 48 minutes.

This was lowered by F. R. Goodwin on July 19, 1899, his time being 10 hours 16 minutes; the speed on this occasion averaging rather over nineteen miles an hour. Even this could not have been accomplished without the aid of the most perfect motor pace-making arrangements. Goodwin smashed all these previous records on his way to establish the London to Edinburgh record of 25 hours 26 minutes, in which the average was somewhat higher; nearly twenty miles an hour.

The next, and latest, safety cycle record to York was made, unpaced, in 1900; when H. Green performed the journey in 10 hours 19 minutes.

The tandem safety London to York records should be mentioned. The first two were set up on July 24, 1895, and October 2, 1896, respectively: by G. P. Mills and T. A. Edge; and T. Hobson and H. E. Wilson, the times being 12 hours 33 minutes, and 11 hours 35 minutes.

These were followed by :—

		Hrs.	Mins.
1901.	A. H. and P. S. Murray (unpaced)	10	59
1905.	R. L. I. Knipe and S. Irving (unpaced)	10	52
1907.	F. H. Wingrave and R. A. Wingrave (unpaced) ..	9	30

The London to Edinburgh records are :

SAFETY BICYCLE.

		Hrs.	Mins.
1889.	F. W. Shorland	44	49
1891.	P. A. Ransom	43	25
1892.	R. H. Carlisle	32	55
1894.	G. P. Mills	29	28
—.	C. C. Fontaine	28	27
1895.	W. J. Neason	27	38
1897.	J. Hunt	26	47
1899.	F. R. Goodwin (motor-paced) .	25	26
1903.	F. Wright (unpaced) ..	31	48
1904.	E. H. Grimsdell „ ..	28	3
—.	G. A. Olley „ ..	27	10
1905.	E. H. Grimsdell „ ..	26	10
—.	R. Shirley „ ..	23	43

A tricycle record, unpaced, made by F. W. Wesley in 1905, at 32 hours 42 minutes yet stands.

Tandem safety records :—

		Hrs.	Mins.
1894.	E. Oxborrow and H. Sansom..	27	33
1905.	E. Bright and P. H. Miles (unpaced)	27	54

XIX

Eaton Socon, its long straggling street and beautiful church-tower, left behind, the road descends to the "river Kym," as the guidebooks call the tiny stream which bordered by marshes, crosses under the road at a point known as Cross Hall. The "river Kym" certainly is, or was, important enough to confer its name upon the neighbouring townlet of Kimbolton, but the country folk now only know it as Weston Brook. The descent to it has of late years acquired the name of "Chicken Hill," given by the North Roaders, racing cyclists, who must often have run over the fowls kept by the people of a cottage at the bottom. This is succeeded by Diddington Bridge, a picturesque, white-painted timber structure spanning the little Diddington Brook, which has eaten its way deeply into the earth, and is romantically shaded by tall trees and bordered by the undergrowth that fills the pretty hollow.

The slight rise from this spot is succeeded by an easy descent into narrow-streeted Buckden, one of those old "thoroughfare" coaching villages which imagined themselves on the way to becoming towns in the fine, free-handed old days. The huge bulk of the "George" is eloquent of this, with its fifteen windows in a row, and the signs still noticeable in the brickwork, showing where the house was doubled in size at the period of its greatest prosperity. Nowadays the "George" is all too large for its trade, and a portion of it is converted into shops. As for the interminable rooms and passages above, they echo hollow to the infrequent footfall, where they were once informed with a cheerful bustle and continuous arrival and departure. There was a period, a few years ago, when the North Road Club's road-racing events brought crowds of cyclists and busy times once more to the "George," but they are irretrievably gone.

To and from Buckden and Welwyn in coaching times drove every day the notable Cartwright, of the York "Express"; a day's work of about seventy miles. Cartwright was something more than a coachman, being himself landlord of the "George" at Buckden, and horsing one or two of the stages over which he drove. "Peter Pry," one of the old *Sporting Magazine's* coaching critics, waxes eloquent over him. It was a vile day when, to sample Cartwright's quality, he set out by the York "Express" from London for Grantham; but neither the weather nor the scenery, nor anything in Heaven or Earth drew his attention from Cartwright. He starts at once with being struck at Welwyn with Cartwright's graceful and easy way of mounting the box, and then proceeds to make a kind of admiring inventory of his person. Thus, he might have been considered to be under fifty years of age, bony, without fat; healthy looking, evidently the effect of abstemiousness; not too tall, but just the size to sit gracefully and powerfully. His right hand and whip were beautifully in unison; he kept his horses like clock-work, and to see the refinement

BUCKDEN.

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with which he managed the whip was well worth riding many hours on a wet day. But the occasions on which he used the whip were rare, although the tits were only fair, and not by any means first-rate. No dandy, but equipped most respectably and modestly, and with good taste, he was the idol of the road, both with old and young; while his manners on the box were respectful, communicative without impertinence, and untarnished with slang. Acquainted with everybody and every occupation within his sphere, he was an entertaining companion even to an ordinary traveller; but he enchanted the amateur of coaching with his perfect professional knowledge, which embraced all niceties. His excellent qualities, we are glad to notice, in conclusion, had gained their reward; he was well-to-do, lived regularly, had a happy family, and envied neither lord nor peasant.

Welwyn, the road to Buckden, and Buckden itself seem quite lonely without this figure of all the virtues and the graces.

Spelt "Bugden" in other times, the inhabitants still pronounce its name in this way. There is a well-defined air of aristocracy about this village, due partly to the ruined towers of the old palace of the Bishops of Lincoln, and to the sturdy old red-brick walls that enclose the grounds in which they stand. They are walls with a thickness and lavish use of material calculated to make the builder of "desirable villa residences" gasp with dismay at such apparently wanton extravagance. But the Bishops of Lincoln, who built those walls in the fifteenth century, had not obtained their land on a building lease; and, moreover, they were building for their own use, which makes a deal of difference, it must be conceded.

You cannot help noticing these walls, for they run for some distance beside the road. Through a gateway is seen a pleasant view of lawns and the front of a modern mansion. The Bishops have long left Buckden, and have gone to reside at their palace at Lincoln, Buckden Palace having been wantonly demolished

when the Order in Council, authorising these Right Reverend Fathers in God to alienate the property, was obtained. The church adjoins their roofless old gatehouse, and is a fine old place of worship, with a stone spire of the Northants type.

In this church will be found a singular example of modesty. It is an epitaph without the name of the person :—

"Sacred to the memory of
AN OFFICER,
who sincerely regarded this
his native village
and caused an asylum to be erected, to protect
Age, and to reward Industry.
Reader, ask not his name.
If thou approve a deed which succours
the helpless, go and emulate it.
Obiit 1834, aet 65.

The tiny hamlet of Hardwick, dignified with mention on the Ordnance map, is passed without its existence being noticed, and the road, flat as though constructed with the aid of a spirit-level, proceeds straight ahead for the town of Huntingdon, swinging acutely to the left for York. Beyond, at the cross-roads, stands Brampton Hut, the modern vivid red-brick successor of the old inn of that name. Brampton village lies down the cross-road to the right, and is the place where Samuel Pepys, it is thought, was born in 1632.* The registers afford no information, for they do not begin until twenty-one years later, and the old gossip himself makes no mention of the fact. His father and mother lived here, and both lie in the church. Their home, his birthplace, stands even now, but so altered that it is practically without much interest. It was in its garden, in October, 1666, that Samuel caused his £1,300 to be buried when the Dutch descent upon London was feared. A timorous soul, poor Samuel! sending his father and his wife down from London to Brampton with the gold, and with £300 in a girdle round where his waist should have been, but was not, for Samuel

*He was baptised in the church of St. Bride, Fleet Street, according to a discovery more recently made; and he would thus appear really to have been a Londoner.

was a man of "full habit," as the elegant phrase, seeking to disguise the accusation of exceeding fatness, has it. Great was his anxiety when, the national danger over, he came down to disinter his hoard. "My father and I with a dark lantern, it being now night, into the garden with my wife, and there went about our great work to dig up my gold. But Lord! what a tosse I was for some time in, that they could not justly tell where it was; but by and by, poking with a spit, we found it, and then begun with a spudd to lift up the ground."

But they had not been cautious in their work. "Good God!" says he, "to see how sillily they hid it, not half a foot under ground, in sight of passers-by and from the neighbours' windows." Then he found the gold all loose, and the notes decaying with the damp, and all the while, routing about among the dirt for the scattered pieces, he was afraid lest the neighbours should see him, and fancy the Pepys family had discovered a gold mine; so he took up dirt and all, and, carrying it to his brother's bedroom, washed it out with the aid of several pails of water and some besoms, with the result that he was still over a hundred pieces short. This "made him mad." He could not go out in the garden with his father, because the old man was deaf, and, in shouting to him, all the neighbours would get to know. So he went out with W. Hewer, and by diligent grubbing in the mould, made the sum nearly tally. The day after, leaving his father to search for the remainder, we find him setting out for London, with his belongings; the gold in a basket in the coach, and he coming to look after it every quarter of an hour.

Something over a mile distant from Brampton cross roads, and passing over two little bridges, we come to a third bridge, spanning one of the lazy rivulets that trickle aimlessly through the flats. It is just an old red-brick bridge, braced with iron and edged with timber; an innocent-looking, although dull and lonely spot, with the water trickling along in

MATCHAM'S BRIDGE.

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its deeply worn bed, and no sound save the occasional splash made by a frightened water-rat. Yet this is "Matcham's Bridge," and the scene of an infamous murder.

Matcham's Bridge, spanning the little river Wey, obtained its name from the murder of a drummer-boy here by Gervase (or Jarvis) Matcham, on the 19th of August 1780. The murder was a remarkable one, and is made additionally memorable by the after-career of the murderer, whose bloody deed and subsequent confession, six years later, form the subject of the *Dead Drummer*, one of Barham's *Ingoldsby Legends*.

Gervase Matcham, the son of a farmer living at Frodingham, in Yorkshire, had a varied and adventurous career. When in his twelfth year, he ran away from home and became a jockey. In the course of this employment he was sent to Russia in charge of some horses presented by the Duke of Northumberland to the Empress, and returning to London well supplied with money, dissipated it all in evil courses. He then shipped as a sailor on board the *Medway* man-of-war, but after a short experience of fighting, managed to desert. He had no sooner landed in England than he was seized by one of the prowling pressgangs that then scoured the seaports, and was shipped aboard the *Ariadne*, fitting out on an expedition to destroy the pirate, Paul Jones. Succeeding in an attempt to escape when off Yarmouth, he enlisted in the 13th Regiment of Foot, and deserting again, near Chatham, set out to tramp through London to York, visiting Huntingdon on the way. The 49th Regiment was then recruiting in the district, and Matcham promptly enlisted in it.

From Huntingdon, on the 19th of August 1780, he was sent to Major Reynolds at Diddington, to draw some subsistence-money, amounting to between £6 and £7. With him was a drummer-boy, Benjamin Jones, aged about sixteen years, the son of the recruiting sergeant. The boy having drawn the money, they

returned along the high road, Matcham drinking on the way. Instead of turning off to Huntingdon, Matcham induced the boy to go on with him in the direction of Alconbury, and picking a quarrel with him at the bridge, seized him and cut his throat, making off with the money. He then fled across country to the nearest seaport, and shipped again to sea. For six years he continued in the Navy and saw hard fighting under Rodney and Hood, being at last paid off H.M.S. *Sampson* at Plymouth, on June 15, 1786. From Plymouth he set out with a messmate—one John Shepherd—to walk along the Exeter Road to London. Near the "Woodyates Inn" they were overtaken one afternoon by a thunderstorm in which Matcham startled his shipmate by his abject terror of some unseen apparition. Eventually he confessed his crime to Shepherd, and begged his companion to hand him over to the nearest magistrate, so that Justice might be satisfied. He was accordingly committed at Salisbury, and, inquiries as to the truth of his confession having been made, he was brought to trial at Huntingdon, found guilty, and executed on the 2nd of August 1786, his body being afterwards hanged in chains on Alconbury Hill.

XX

The summit of this convenient Golgotha is the place where the North Road and the Great North Road adjust their differences, and proceed by one route to the North. Not a very terrible hill, after all, despite the way in which it figures in the letters and diaries of old travellers; but nowadays a very lonely place, although it is the meeting-point of two main roads and that of a branch one. It was once different indeed, and the great "Wheatsheaf" inn and posting-house, which stood a hundred yards or so away from the junction, used commonly to send out thirty pairs of post-horses

a day. This establishment was kept in its prime by John Warsop, who lived long enough to see his business ruined by railways. Let no one imagine the "Wheatsheaf" public-house, standing where the roads meet, to be the representative of that old posting-house. Face north, and you will see a private house of considerable size standing on the east side of the road, behind a hedge and lawn. Not a beautiful house; in fact, an ugly house of a dingy whitey-buff brick, the colour of pastry taken out of the oven before it is properly baked. Approaching nearer, it will be observed that this building is now divided into two private residences. This was once the "Wheatsheaf." In the bygone days it possessed a semicircular approach from the road, and afforded all the year round, and round the clock of every day and night, a busy scene; with the postboys, whose next turn-out it was, sleeping with spur on heel, ready to mount and away at a minute's notice, north, south, east, or west. Those times and manners are as absolutely vanished as though they never had existed, and even although there are yet living those who remember the old "Wheatsheaf" of their youthful days, perhaps not one wayfarer in a hundred has any idea of that once busy era on Alconbury Hill. How many of all those who pass this way have ever noticed that pathetic relic of the "Wheatsheaf's" bygone prosperity, the old post from which its sign used to hang? It is still to be seen, by those who know where to look for it, facing the road, a venerable and decrepit relic, now thickly covered with ivy, and somewhat screened from the casual glance by the shrubs and trees growing close beside it.

Travellers coming south could have a choice of routes to London from Alconbury Hill, as the elaborate old milestone still standing at the parting of the ways indicates, showing sixty-four miles by way of Huntingdon, Royston, and Ware, and four miles longer by the way we have come. This monumental milestone, now somewhat dilapidated, railed round,

ALCONBURY HILL: JUNCTION OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD AND THE NORTH ROAD.

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and with some forlorn-looking wall-flowers growing inside the enclosure, is a striking object, situated at a peculiarly impressive spot, where the left-hand route by Huntingdon is seen going off on the level to a vanishing-point lost in the distant haze, rather than by any dip or curve of the road to right or left; the right-hand road diving down the hill to Alconbury Weston and Alconbury at its foot.

The descent, going north, is known as Stangate Hill, and leads past the lonely churchyard of Sawtry St. Andrews, whose church has disappeared as utterly as Sawtry Abbey, which, less wealthy than the great abbeys of Ramsey, Thorney, Crowland, or Peterborough, stood beside the road, and was besieged by mediæval tramps :—

> "Sawtry-by-the-Way, that old Abbaye,
> Gave more alms in one day than all they."

Thus ran the old rhyme. To-day, the only vestiges of that vanished religious house are in the names of Monk's Wood, to the right of the road, descending the hill, and of the Abbey Farm.

The foot of Stangate Hill is no doubt the place called by Thoresby and others "Stangate Hole," where highwaymen were confidently to be expected. De Foe, writing about 1720 of this road, says: "Some Parts are still paved with stone, which strengthens the conjecture that the Name Stangate was given it from thence. It traverses great woods between the Two Saltries."

In his spelling of "Sawtry," in that last line, although he does not follow the invariable form, he has hit upon the original. For "Sawtry" was in the beginning "Salt Reeth." Salt marshes and creeks crept inland even as far as this, past Ely and Ramsey.

Stilton lies some three miles ahead, and, two miles before reaching it, the old "Crown and Woolpack," a very large red-brick posting-house, part of it still occupied as an inn, the rest used as cottages, while the stables are given over to spiders and lumber.

Passing this, the road presently begins to rise gently, and then, level again, widens out to almost treble its usual width, where a long street of mingled old houses and cottages, a medley of stone, brick, and plaster, stands, strangely silent. This is Stilton, dreaming of bygone busy times. Had the railway touched here, things would have worn a very different aspect at Stilton to-day. Let us, therefore, thank the shades of that Marquis of Exeter, and of the others who resisted the railway, and by causing it to describe a wide loop instead of hugging the road, unwittingly contributed to the preservation in a glass case, as it were, of this old coaching centre.

Night and day the coaches kept Stilton awake, and if for a few minutes there was no coach, the post-chaises at one end of the social scale, and the fly-wagons at the other, kept the inns busy. Stilton buzzed with activity then. From the far North came the drovers, doing twenty miles a day, with their sheep and cattle, their pigs and geese ; animal creation marching, martyrs in their sort, to Smithfield. At Stilton they shod the cattle, like horses, and one blacksmith's business here consisted of nothing else than this.

The glory of Stilton has departed, and the " Bell " and the " Angel " face one another, dolefully wondering in what channels the tide of business now flows. The " Bell " is more racy of the soil than the " Angel," just as it is also much older. We are here in a stone district, and the " Bell " is a building of that warm yellowish stone characteristic of these parts. Built at the very beginning of the seventeenth century, it was already of a respectable age when the brick " Angel " opposite began to rise from its foundations. The older house is *the* feature of Stilton, its great sign, with the mazy quirks and curls of its wrought-iron supports, projecting far out towards the road, and arresting the eye on first entering the street. The sign itself is painted on copper, for the sake of lightness, but has long been supported by a crutch, in the shape

of a post. With this ornamental iron-work, incomparably the finest sign on the road, it was in the old days the subject of many wagers made by coachmen and guards with unwary strangers who did not, like those artful ones, know its measurements. It measures in fact 6 ft. $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in height.

The old "Talbot" inn still has its coach gallery, or balcony, in front.

The "Angel," in the best days of posting, became the principal house at Stilton, and the little public-house of that name next door to the commanding brick building which is now a private residence was only the tap of the hotel. But the "Bell," that has seen the beginning and the end of the "Angel," still survives, with memories of the days when the delicacy which renders the name of Stilton world-famous had its origin. Allusion is hereby made—need one explain it?—to "Stilton" cheese. They say—those old stagers who knew it when its local reputation first began to be dispersed throughout the country—that Stilton cheese is not what it was. What is? The "English Parmesan," they called it then, when their palates first became acquainted with it, but it deserved better of them than that. It was a species of itself, and not justly comparable with aught else. But Stilton cheese is not, nor ever was, made at Stilton, or anywhere near it. It originated with Mrs. Paulet of Wymondham, near Melton Mowbray, who first supplied it to Cooper Thornhill, the once celebrated landlord of the "Bell," for the use of the table provided for the coach passengers and other travellers who dined there. Mrs. Paulet's cheeses immediately struck connoisseurs as a revelation, and they came into demand, not only on Thornhill's table, but were eagerly purchased for themselves or friends by those who travelled this way. Thornhill was too businesslike a man to give away the secret of the make, and he did very well for himself, charging as he did half-a-crown a pound. Then the almost equally famous Miss Worthington, of the "Angel," began to supply

THE "BELL," STILTON.

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" Stilton " cheeses, so that scarce any one came throug the place but was asked to buy one. Nor did travelle usually wait to be asked. If it happened that the did not want any for themselves, they were usuall charged by friends with commissions to purchase a they passed through. Smiling waiters and maic servants, Miss Worthington herself, rosy, plum benevolent-looking, asked travellers if they would no like to take away with them a real Stilton cheese. Miss Worthington, the kindly, whose lavender-scented beds were famed along the whole length of the Great North Road—there she stood, declaring that they were real Stilton cheeses ! Nor were travellers for a long while any the wiser. Stilton folks kept the secret well. But it gradually leaked out. A native of those parts, too, was the traitor. " Pray, sir, would you like a nice Stilton cheese to take away with you ? " asked the unsuspecting landlady, as the coach on whose outside he was seated drew up.

" Do you say they are made at Stilton ? " he asked in reply.

" Oh, yes," said she.

Then came the crushing rejoinder. " Why, Mis Worthington, you know perfectly well that no Stilto cheese was ever made at Stilton ; they're all made i Leicestershire, and as you say *your* cheeses are mad at Stilton, they cannot be good, and I won't have one." The secret was then, of course, exploded.

Which of these two inns could it have been to which Mrs. Calderwood of Coltness refers in her diary when, travelling from Scotland to London in th middle of the eighteenth century, she mentions Stilton a " fine large inn," where the linen was " perfit rags as ever I saw : plain linen with fifty hol in each towell." It would be interesting to know, bu it is hopeless now to attempt to identify it.

XXI

P-HILL from Stilton, three-quarters of a mile away, ut well within sight, stands the Norman Cross inn, here the Peterborough, Louth, Lincoln, and Hull oaches turned off to the right.

Norman Cross! how many have been those old-time cyclists who have partaken of the hospitality of

NORMAN CROSS.

the inn here! Not always, though, has it been a place of welcome memories. For years, indeed, during the ong struggles between England and France, this was ne site of one of the largest of the prisons in which aptured French soldiers were incarcerated. Over hree thousand were placed here, officers and privates, ome remaining captive for more than ten years. Happy those who, through influence or by mere luck, ere selected to be exchanged for our soldiers, prisoners n France.

It was a weary time for those poor fellows. Many them died in the great insanitary sheds in which

they were confined, and others lost their reason. Desperate men sometimes succeeded in escaping to the coast, where friends were awaiting them. Others, wandering over the lonely flats, perished miserably in the dykes and drains into which they fell when the mists shrouded the countryside. There were, again, those who stabbed the sentries and made off. Such an one was Charles François Marie Bonchew, an officer, who had wounded, but had not killed, a sentry named Alexander Halliday. Being captured, he was sentenced to death at Huntingdon, and was brought back to Norman Cross to be executed, September 1808. All the prisoners were turned out to witness the execution, and the garrison was under arms.

But it was not all savagery and horror here among those military captives, for they were often allowed out on parole, within certain hours and well-defined bounds. It was understood that no prisoner out on parole should leave the highroad, nor was he to be at large after sunset. If he disregarded these rules he was liable to be shot at sight by any one who had a gun handy. He was an Ishmael against whom every hand was turned, and, indeed, the Post Office offered a reward of £5 to any mail guard who, seeing a prisoner breaking parole, should shoot him. After several inoffensive farm-labourers, going home after dusk, had been peppered with shot in mistake by guards anxious to secure this reward, the village streets and roads adjacent became singularly desolate when a coach was heard approaching.

There were exceptions to these strict rules, and officers of high rank—and consequently assumed to have a nicer sense of honour than that obtaining among subalterns and the rank and file—were permitted to take private lodgings at Stilton. Those were the fortunate ones. Most of the prisoners, unhappily, were penniless, and after a time even their own Government refused supplies for their maintenance. Accordingly, they obtained some few little luxuries, and employed the time that hung so heavily on their

hands, by carving toys and artistic nick-nacks out of fragments of wood, or from the bones left from their rations, and selling them to the crowds of country folks who came to gaze at them on certain days. Straw-plaiting, too, was a prisoners' industry, until it was stopped by some of the military in charge.

In March, 1812, Sergeant Ives, of the West Essex Militia, was stopped on the highway between Stilton and Norman Cross by a number of persons unknown, who, after having knocked him down and robbed him of his money and watch, wrenched open his jaws, and with savage cruelty, cut off a piece of his tongue. It was supposed that this outrage was in revenge for his having been concerned in suppressing the plait trade at Norman Cross barracks.

The prisoners were not entirely without spiritual consolation, for the good Bishop de Moulines appointed himself their chaplain, and, of his own free will leaving France, took up residence at Stilton. He attended them in sickness, and helped them out of his own resources.

The officers in charge of these prisoners were often brutal, but that there were some who sympathised with their sorrows is evident from the tablet still to be seen in Yaxley Church, a mile distant, which tells of the gratitude of the prisoners for the kindness shown them by Captain John Draper, R.N., who died after being in charge of the prison for only eighteen months.

Norman Cross Prison, or "Yaxley Barracks"—Norman Cross being in the parish of Yaxley—built in 1796, was demolished in 1816, and no vestige of it is left.

And so all recollection of these things might in time have faded away had it not been for the monument erected by the wayside in the fateful year 1914. Let us pause to consider that moment. Events were hurrying towards the beginning of the Great War of 1914–18, and the nation in general was wholly ignorant of what was coming. Stupidly ignorant, for there were

many omens. It was at this moment, afterwards seen to be so full of tragedy, that the memorial pillar on, or near, the site of Yaxley Barracks, to the memory of those French prisoners of war, was unveiled, July 28th, 1914, by Lord Weardale. A gilded bronze French Imperial eagle stoops on the crest of a handsome pillar, and on the plinth is a tablet stating that this is a memorial to 1770 French prisoners who died in captivity.

FRENCH PRISONERS OF WAR MONUMENT, NORMAN CROSS.

These incidents, "picked from the wormholes of long vanished days," give romance to the otherwise featureless road onwards to Kate's Cabin and Water Newton. The "Kate's Cabin" inn is mentioned by every road-book of coaching-times, but no one ever

condescended to explain the origin of this curious sign, and the inn itself, once standing in the receipt of custom at the cross-roads, three miles and a half from Norman Cross, is now a pretty cottage.

Nearly two miles onward, Water Newton comes in sight, standing, dry and secure, on its knoll above the water-meadows on the river Nene. On the western face of its church tower, which originally, before Wansford bridge was built and the road diverted, faced the highway, may yet be seen a tabernacle containing an ancient effigy of a man in semi-ecclesiastical attire, his hands clasped in prayer. An inscription in Norman French may with some difficulty be deciphered beneath it, inviting the passer-by to pray for the soul of Thomas Purden :—

SCULPTURED FIGURE, WATER NEWTON CHURCH.

"VOVS KE PAR
ISSI PASSEZ
POVR LE ALME
TOMAS PVR
DEN PRIEZ."

Read aloud, we perceive this to be intended for rhyme.

No one prays for the soul of Thomas Purden nowadays, for these two very excellent and individually sufficient reasons—that prayers for the dead are not customary in the Church of England, and that, since the road has been diverted, there are no passers-by.

This brings us to the reason why Thomas Purden should have expected wayfarers to intercede for his soul. That he expected them to do this out of gratitude seems obvious ; but it is not at first evident for what

they should be so grateful. We are, however, to bear in mind that a road passed down beside this church tower in those days, where no road—only a meadow—exists to-day. The meadow slopes steeply to the river, and doubtless a ford, a ferry, or some primitive bridge was established here by Thomas Purden long before even a wooden bridge existed at Wansford. In

WATER NEWTON CHURCH.

providing *some* safe method by which travellers might pass this river, even now subject to dangerous floods, Purden would have been a benefactor in the eyes alike of men and of Holy Church, and fully entitled to the prayers and intercessions of all.

For many years the head of the figure had disappeared, but when the church was restored, some years since, an ingenious mason fitted him with another which had, in the usual careless fashion of

restorers, been knocked off something else. And it is a simple truth that since its "restoration," Water Newton church is sadly bare.

By the wayside, on the left, against the wall of a farm-house residence, will be noticed an old milestone and horseman's upping-block combined. It marks the 81st mile from London, and bears the initials "E. B.," together with the date, 1708. This is perhaps the only survivor of a series which, according to De Foe, in his "Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain," a Mr. Boulter was projecting "to London, for the general benefit."

EDMUND BOULTER'S MILESTONE.

Edmund Boulter was one of the family who were then seated at Gawthorp Hall, near Leeds, and who, not much later, sold that property to Henry Lascelles, father of the first Lord Harewood.

At the hamlet of Sibson, on the left hand in descending toward the level-crossing at Wansford station, may still be seen the stocks and whipping-post beside the road. To the right flows the winding Nene, through illimitable oozy meadows, its course marked in the far distance by the pollard willows that line its banks. The Nene here divides the counties of Huntingdonshire and Northants, Wansford itself lying in the last-mentioned county and Stibbington on the hither side of the river. The famous Wansford Bridge joins the two, and helps to render Wansford and Stibbington one place in the eyes of strangers. Both places belong to the Duke of Bedford, Stibbington bearing the mark of its ownership distinctly visible in its severe and uncomfortable-looking "model" modern-gothic stone houses, with the coroneted "B" on their gables. In this manner the accursed Russells have bedevilled many of the villages and townlets unhappily owned by them, and the feelings of all who live in their ear-marked houses must be akin to those of paupers who inhabit workhouses and infirmaries, with the important exception that the Duke's tenants pay rent and taxes. Wansford, fortunately, has not been rebuilt, and it is possible for the villagers to live without an uncomfortable sense of belonging, body and soul, to the Dukes of Bedford.

The famous "Haycock" inn, usually spoken of as at Wansford, is, in fact, on the Huntingdonshire side of the bridge, and in Stibbington. Its sign alludes to the supposed origin of the curious nick-name of "Wansford-in-England," first mentioned in that scarce little early eighteenth-century book, *Drunken Barnaby's Four Journeys to the North of England*. In its pages he describes being carried off by a flood:—

> "On a haycock sleeping soundly,
> Th' River rose and took me roundly
> Down the current: People cry'd;
> Sleeping, down the Stream I hy'd:
> 'Where away,' quoth they, 'from Greenland?'
> 'No, from Wansforth-brigs in England.'"

This "in England" has puzzled many. It really refers to the situation of Wansford in Northamptonshire, near, but not in, "Holland"—the Holland division of Lincolnshire.

Wansford's peculiar fame is thus more than local. Perhaps the queer picture-sign of the grand old inn, representing Drunken Barnaby on his haycock, helped to disperse it over England in days when it could not fail to be seen by every passing traveller. The "Haycock" ceased to be an inn, and is now occupied as a hunting-box. It affords a pleasing relief from the Duke of Bedford's almshouse-looking cottages, and is a building not only of considerable age, but of dignified architectural character. Stone-built, with handsome

THE "HAYCOCK," WANSFORD.

windows and steep slated roof, and carefully designed, even to its chimneys, it is, architecturally speaking, among the very finest of the houses ever used as inns in England, and has more the appearance of having been originally designed as a private mansion than as a house of public entertainment. The sign is now hung in the hall of the house, the corbels it rested on being still visible beside the present door, replacing the old archway by which the coaches and post-chaises entered and left the courtyard of the inn of old.

The "Haycock," even in its days as an inn, was a noted hunting centre. Situated in the country of the Fitzwilliam Hunt, it afforded, with its splendid accommodation for guests and for horses, headquarters for those who had not a hunting-box of their own, and in those days stabled as many as a hundred and fifty horses.

"Young Percival" kept the "Haycock" from about 1826, and drove the "Regent" between Wansford and Stamford, in place of "old John Barker." At that time he had more valour than discretion in driving, and on one occasion at least nearly brought disaster

SIGN OF THE "HAYCOCK."

upon the coach at the famous bridge by "punishing" a spirited team which had given some trouble at starting. At the steep and narrow entrance to the bridge they took it in their heads to resent his double-thonging, the leaders turning round, and the whole team presently facing towards London instead of

WANSFORD BRIDGE.

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Stamford. They had to be driven back to the "Haycock," and Barker took them on to Stamford.

That bridge would have been an exceedingly awkward place for a coach accident. It is picturesqueness itself, and by consequence not the most convenient for traffic. Originally built in 1577, with thirteen arches, it was repaired in 1674, as a Latin inscription carved midway on it informs the inquiring stranger. In the winter of 1795 an ice-flood destroyed some of the southernmost arches, which were replaced the following year by two wider spans, so that Wansford Bridge has now only ten openings. The northern approach to it from Stamford leads down in a dangerous, steep, sudden, and narrow curve, intersected by a cross-road. Now that there is no longer a turnpike gate at this point to bring the traffic to a slow pace, this descent is fruitful in accidents, and at least one cyclist has been killed here in an attempt to negotiate this sharp curve on the descent into the cross-road. An inoffensive cottage standing at the corner opposite the "Mermaid" inn has received many a cyclist through its window, and the new masonry of its wall bears witness to the wreck caused by a heavy wagon hurtling down the hill, carrying away the side of the house.

The five miles between Wansford and Stamford begin with this long rise, whose crest was cut through in coaching days, the earth taken being used to fill up a deep hollow which succeeded, where a little brook trickled across the road, the coaches fording it. Thence, by what used to be called in the old road-books "Whitewater Turnpike," past the few cottages of Thornhaugh, and so to where the long wall of Burghley Park begins on the right hand. Here the telegraph poles, that have hitherto so unfailingly followed the highway, suddenly go off to the right, and into Stamford by the circuitous Barnack road, in deference to the objections, æsthetic or otherwise, of the Marquis of Exeter, against their going through his park.

The famous Burghley House by Stamford town is not visible from the road, and is indeed situated a mile within the park, only the gate-house to the estate being passed in the long descent into that outlying portion of the town known as Stamford Baron.

There is, amid the works of Tennyson, a curiously romantic poem, "The Lord of Burleigh," which on the part of the literary pilgrim will repay close examination; and this examination will yield some astonishing results. It is, briefly stated, the story of an Earl masquerading as a landscape painter and winning the heart and hand of a farmer's daughter. He takes her, after the wedding, to see—

"A mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before;
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
'All of this is mine and thine.'
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he."

The original person from whose doings this poem was written was, in fact, Henry Cecil, tenth Earl, and afterwards first Marquis, of Exeter. He was the lord of Burghley House (not "Burleigh Hall"), by Stamford town, and his descendants are there yet.

Not a landscape painter, but a kind of London man about town and Member of Parliament for Stamford, 1774–1780, 1784–1790, and then plain Mr. Henry Cecil (for he did not succeed his uncle in the title until December, 1793), he is found rather mysteriously wandering about Shropshire in 1789, calling himself (there is never any accounting for taste) "Mr. Jones." He was then a man who had been married fourteen years, and was thirty-six years of age.

The scene opens (thus to put it in dramatic form)

on an evening towards the end of June, 1789, when a stranger knocked at the door of Farmer Hoggins at Great Bolas in Shropshire, and begged shelter for the night. He was obviously a gentleman, but called himself by the very plebian name of "John Jones." He made himself so agreeable that his stay "for the night" lasted some weeks, and he returned again in a month or so, taking up his residence in the village. The attraction which brought him back to Great Bolas was evidently Sarah Hoggins, the farmer's daughter, at that time a girl of sixteen, having been born in June, 1773. He proposed for Sarah, and on April 17th, 1790, they were married in Great Bolas Church, the register showing that he married in the name of "John Jones." Meanwhile he had purchased land in the village, and built a house which he called "Bolas Villa." Gossip grew extremely busy with this mysterious stranger who had thus descended upon the place, and it was generally suspected that he was a highwayman in an extensive way of business, especially as some notable highway robberies happened coincidently with his appearance.

Early in 1794, "Mr. John Jones," living thus at Great Bolas, learnt that his uncle, the ninth Earl of Exeter, had died in December. Telling his wife they must journey into Northamptonshire, where he had business, they set out and arrived at "Burghley House, by Stamford town," and there he disclosed to her for the first time that he was not "John Jones," but Henry Cecil, and now Earl of Exeter.

At what time he broke the news to her that he was already a married man there is no evidence to show. Strictly speaking, he had made a bigamous marriage, because, although his wife, one of the Vernons of Hanbury, in Worcestershire, had eloped on June 14, 1789, with the Reverend William Sneyd, curate of that place, he had at the time taken no steps to obtain a divorce.

But he had every excuse. He had honestly fallen in love with Sarah Hoggins after thus meeting her while wandering about the country a few days after

BURGHLEY HOUSE, BY STAMFORD TOWN.

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his wife's flight; and he obtained a divorce by Act of Parliament in March, 1791. Having done this, he married Sarah Hoggins secondly some six months later (October 3) in the City of London Church of St. Mildred, Bread Street, in whose register his name appears as "Henry Cecil, bachelor."

Tennyson's poem is, therefore, rather more romantic than truthful; and the lines which tell us how she murmured—

> "Oh! that he
> Were again that landscape painter
> Who did win my heart from me,"

have no authority. Nor is there any evidence to warrant the statement that—

> "A trouble weighed upon her
> And perplexed her, night and morn,
> With the burthen of an honour
> Unto which she was not born."

The poet continues—

> "So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
> Fading slowly from his side;
> Three fair children first she bore him,
> Then before her time she died."

The Countess of Exeter, in fact, died on January 18, 1797, not quite twenty-four years of age; but not from "the burthen of an honour unto which she was not born." Happily, accession to the ranks of the titled nobility is not fatal, as the marriage of many distinguished ornaments of the musical comedy stage assure us; and so we must charge the Poet Laureate with the flunkey thought that blue blood is a kind apart, and not to be admixed with other strains. This from the poet who wrote—

> "Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood."

is unexpected.

She left two sons and one daughter. Her eldest

son became second Marquis of Exeter, his father, the Earl, having been raised a step in the peerage in 1801.

The enterprising Earl married, thirdly, in 1800, the divorced wife of the eighth Duke of Hamilton, and died May 1, 1804, aged fifty; but his third wife survived until January 17, 1837. In the billiard-room of Burghley House is a portrait-group of "the Lord of Burleigh" and his wife, Sarah Hoggins, by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

"Bolas Villa" was given by the Earl to his godson. It has since been enlarged, and is now styled "Burghley Villa." The church of Great Bolas is a grim-looking brick building of the eighteenth century, when many of the Shropshire churches in that district were rebuilt.

XXII

STAMFORD compels enthusiasm, from the first glimpse of it on entering, to the last regretful backward glance on leaving. It is historic, picturesque, stately, aristocratic, and cleanly, all at once. Its stone-built mansions and houses are chiefly of the Renaissance period, from Elizabeth onwards to the time of George the First, and it is in this sort the most beautiful town in England, after Oxford and Cambridge, and even in some aspects surpassing them.

Apart from its lovely churches, one seeks not Gothic architecture at Stamford but the stateliness of classic methods as understood in the sixteenth and seventeenth century revival. It is this especial architectural character which gives the town such an air of academic distinction and leads the stranger to compare it with the great university towns, even before the fact comes to his knowledge that Stamford itself was once the seat of a University.

The entrance is of a peculiar stateliness, the broad quiet street descending, lined with dignified private houses, to where the river Welland flows beneath the

bridge, dividing the counties of Northampton and Lincoln, and Stamford Baron from Stamford town. On the right hand rises the fine tower of St. Martin's, its perforated battlements showing, lace-like, against the sky, just as when Turner painted his view. Lower down across the street straddles the sign of the great "George" inn, and a few steps forward serve to disclose the exquisite picture of St. Mary's tower and spire soaring from the rising ground on the other side of the river. The "distracting bustle of the 'George,' which exceeded anything I ever saw or heard," as the Reverend Thomas Twining wrote, in 1776, has long since become a thing of the past, and a certain quiet dignity now belongs to it, as to Stamford in general.

The "George" is an inn with a history. Charles the First slept there, August 23, 1645, and a whole train of dignitaries at one time or another. "Billy the Butcher," too, returning from Culloden, stayed in the house, and with his officers celebrated that victory. "Billy the Butcher," one regrets to say, was the vulgar nickname by which the people called William, Duke of Cumberland.

Distinguished foreigners without number have rested here and wondered at the habits of Englishmen. The foreigner, it is to be feared, never, with every advantage, really understands us; sometimes, too, he is so perverse that we find a difficulty in understanding him. Thus, Master Estienne Perlin, who travelled the roads and sampled the inns of England so far back as 1558, says we were great drunkards then. He wrote an account of his travels, and of England, as it appeared to him; and the way in which he wrestles with the pronunciation of the language is amusing enough. Thus, according to this traveller, if an Englishman would treat you, he would say in his language: "Vis dring a' quarta uin oim gasquim oim hespaignol oim malvoysi." This is merely maddening, and it is a positive relief to know that the meaning of it is, "Will you drink a quart of Gascony wine, another of Spanish, and another of

ENTRANCE TO STAMFORD.
(*After J. M. W. Turner R.A.*)

CORI
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Malmsey?" According to this, the Englishman of three hundred years ago mixed his drinks alarmingly. "In drinking," continues this amusing foreigner, "they will say to you, a hundred times, 'Drind iou,' which is, 'I drink to you'; and you should answer them in their language, 'Iplaigiou,' which means 'I pledge you.' If you would thank them in their language, you say, 'God tanque artelay.' When they are drunk," he concludes, "they will swear by blood and death that you shall drink all that is in your cup, and will say to you thus: 'Bigod sol drind iou agoud uin.'"

Such customs as these must have been excellent business for the "George" and its contemporaries.

To this inn belongs an incident not paralleled elsewhere. The daughter of one of its landlords, Margaret, daughter of Bryan Hodgson, married a bishop! Or, more exactly, one who became a bishop: the Reverend Beilby Porteous, who at the time of his marriage, in 1765, was vicar of Ruckinge and Wittersham, in Kent. In 1776 he became Bishop of Chester, and eleven years later Bishop of London. This was long years before Whincup kept the house. He reigned here in the full tide of the coaching age, and was one of the proprietors of the "Stamford Regent."

Much history has been made at Stamford, from the time when it was the "stone ford" of the Romans across the Welland, through the long ages of blood and destruction, stretching, with little intermission, from the days of Saxon and Danish conflicts to that final clash of arms in 1643, when Cromwell held the town and besieged Burghley House; and to that Monday in the first week of May, 1646, when Charles the First, having slept the night before at the residence of Alderman Wolph (descended from Wulph, son of King Harold) slipped through a postern-gate in the town wall, and so escaped for a final few hours as a free man. The gate is there yet, in the grounds of Barn Hill House, a mansion which, in 1729, was purchased by Stukeley, the antiquary, vicar of All Saints.

Here is no place to tell of the Councils and Parl ments held at Stamford; but, as justifying t academic air the town still holds, it must be said tha it was indeed the home of a University, long centuries ago. It was following the early quarrels of Oxford University and Oxford town that a body of students left that seat of learning, in 1260, and set up a temporary home at Northampton. Political troubles drove them, six years later, to Stamford, where they founded several Colleges and Halls, which were already flourishing when, in 1333, the northern students at Oxford, disgusted with the alleged favouritism shown to the southerners, left in a body and found a welcome at Stamford. Liberty in those days was construed as permission given the strong to oppress the weak, and so when Oxford University and Oxford town jointly petitioned the king to forbid the seceders learning where they listed, those unhappy students were promptly arrested and sent back to suck wisdom from *alma mater* on the Isis. Oxford and Cambridge both agreed not to recognise degrees conferred by Stamford, and at length, by 1463, this University was strangled.

The actual relics of those times are few. Chief in point of interest is the old Brasenose Gate, the only fragment of the College of that name, said to have been founded by students from Brasenose College, Oxford. Here remained until recent years the ancient bronze knocker, in the form of a lion's head with a massive ring in its mouth, brought, according to the legend, from the Oxford college. This knocker certainly belongs to a period not later than the thirteenth century, and may have been conveyed away. Whether it was the original "brazen nose," said to have originated the odd name of the College, or whether that name arose from the *brassen-huis*, or brew-house, whose site the original College was built upon, is one of those mysteries of derivation never likely to be solved. During the last years of its stay at Stamford, the knocker was kept in a house adjoining, until it and the house were purchased by

Brasenose College, Oxford, in whose Common Room the ancient relic now occupies a place of honour.

Stamford was attached to the Yorkist cause in the Wars of the Roses, and had occasion to regret the fact; for it offered an especial mark to the victorious Lancastrians in 1461, after the battle of St. Albans, when Sir Andrew Trollope, with the triple ferocity of

STAMFORD.

the *trois loups* from which the name derives, fell upon the town and pillaged and burnt it. Eight churches, two castles, and the town walls, together with many

hundreds of houses, were destroyed, and Stamford has never recovered its ancient importance since then. It is enough for us that it is among the stateliest of towns, stone-built and dignified; with its beautiful churches of St. Mary, All Saints, and St. Martin; its old almshouses and mansions, not exactly matched in all England.

The histories tell of a long list of famous men, natives of Stamford; but the mere mental capacity or personal bravery shown by these great ones is sardonically overshadowed by the physical greatness of quite another kind of person, who, although not even a native of Stamford, has, by his dying here, shed an especial lustre upon the town.

DANIEL LAMBERT.

Far transcending the fame of all other personages is that of Daniel Lambert, the Fat Man. In the computation of avoirdupois and of the tape-measure, this was the greatest figure that ever travelled the Great North Road. No king or noble can vie with him, nor are saintly shrines more zealously visited than his grave in the old churchyard of St. Martin's. While the tomb of that great Cecil, the Lord Treasurer Burghley, within the church, remains often unvisited, photographs of Daniel Lambert and of his epitaph meet the traveller at every turn.

Although destined to this undying fame, and to pothouse canonisation, Daniel's career was short, as that epitaph tells us :—

"In Remembrance of
That Prodigy in Nature
DANIEL LAMBERT
who was possessed of
An exalted and convivial mind
And in personal greatness
Had no Competitor
He measured three feet, one inch, round the leg
Nine feet, four inches, round the body
And Weighed
Fifty-two stone Eleven pounds
He departed this life
On the 21st of June
1809
Aged 39 years."

His diet is said to have been plain, and the quantity moderate, and he never drank anything stronger than water. His countenance was manly and intelligent, and he had a melodious tenor voice. For some years before his death he had toured the country, exhibiting himself, and visited London on two occasions. The weights and measurements quoted on his tombstone were taken at Huntingdon only the day before his death. In the evening he arrived at the "Waggon and Horses," Stamford, in good health, in preparation for "receiving company" during Stamford Races, but before nine o'clock the next morning was dead in the room on the ground floor which he had taken because of his inability to go upstairs. For many years two of his suits were shown at the inn, seven men often succeeding in squeezing themselves within the mighty embrace of his waistcoat, without bursting a button.

The "Waggon and Horses" has long since given place to a school, and so here is a place of pilgrimage the less; but Daniel's fame is immortal, for he lives as the sign of many an inn and refreshment-house, whose proprietors use him as an advertisement of the plenteous fare to be obtained within, regardless of the fact that his immense bulk was due rather to a dropsical habit than to much eating or drinking.

XXIII

The road, mounting steeply out of Stamford, reaches a fine, elevated track commanding wide views. This is the spot chosen by Forrest for his painting of the old "Highflyer" London, York, and Edinburgh coach which ran from 1788 to 1840. In less than two miles the road crosses the border of Lincolnshire, traversing for six miles an outlying corner of little Rutland, the smallest county in England, and entering Lincolnshire again on passing Stretton. Great Casterton, at the foot of the hill two and a quarter miles from Stamford, is in Rutland. It is said to be situated on the Guash, but that stream and the bridge over it, from which the old road-books often called the village "Bridge Casterton," are not readily glimpsed.

It is a pretty stone-built village, with a well preserved Early English church beside the road. "Greatness," either as a village or as the site of a Roman "castrum" (whence derives the "Caster"-ton) has long ceased to be a characteristic of this pleasant spot, and the ancient Roman camp is now visible only in some grassy banks where the rathe primrose grows.

Just beyond Casterton, coyly hiding down a lane to the left, is the little village of Tickencote, preserving in its name some prehistoric goat-farm, "Tyccen-cote" meaning in the Anglo-Saxon nothing more nor less than "goat's-home." Of more tangible interest is the splendid Norman church, of small size but extraordinary elaboration; a darkling building with heavy chancel arch covered with those zigzags, lozenges, birds' heads, and tooth-mouldings so beloved by Norman architects, and with a "Norman" nave built in 1792 to replace that portion of the building destroyed many years before. The pseudo-Norman work of our own day is, almost without exception, vile, and that of the eighteenth century was worse, but here is an

THE "HIGHFLYER," 1840.
(After Forrest.)

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example of such faithful copying of existing portions that now, since a hundred years and more have passed and the first freshness of the new masonry gone, it is difficult to distinguish the really old work from the copy.

Returning to the highroad, a further two miles bring us to Horn Lane, the site of a vanished turnpike gate, and to the coppices and roadside trees of Bloody Oaks, where the battle of Empingham was fought, March 13, 1470, between the forces of Edward the Fourth and the hastily assembled Lincolnshire levies of Sir Robert Welles and Sir Thomas de la Launde, fighting, *not* for the Lancastrian cause, as so often stated, but in an insurrection fomented by the Earl of Warwick, whose object was to raise Edward's brother, the Duke of Clarence, to the throne. It was a massacre,

BLOODY OAKS.

rather than a battle, for Edward's army was both more numerous and better equipped, and the rebels soon broke and fled. Flinging away their weapons, and even portions of their clothing, as they went, the fight

was readily named "Losecoat Field." The captured leaders paid for their ineffectual treason with their blood, for they were executed at Stamford.

The country folks have quite forgotten Losecoat Field, and think the woodlands of Bloody Oaks were so named from the execution of John Bowland, a highwayman who was gibbeted at Empingham Corner in 1769.

Greetham spire now rises away to the left, and shows where that village lies hid. Here, away from the village and facing the highroad, stood, and stands still, the "Greetham Inn." It is now a farmhouse, and has lost its stables, its projecting bar-parlour, and its entrance archway. Once, however, it was one of the foremost inns and posting-houses on the road. Marked on old Ordnance maps as the "Oak," it seems to have been really named the "New Inn," if we may judge from an inscription cut on stone under the eaves: "This is the New Inn, 1786." However this may have been, it was known to travellers, coachmen, and postboys along the road only as "Greetham Inn." Towards the last it was kept by one of the Percivals of Wansford. At that time no fewer than forty-four coaches—twenty-two up and the same number down—changed here and at the "Black Bull," Witham Common, every twenty-four hours.

Less than a mile down the road is that humble little public-house whose strange sign, the "Ram Jam," has puzzled many people. Its original name was the "Winchilsea Arms," and it bore no other sign than the armorial shield of the Earls of Winchilsea until long after coaching days were done; but in all that time it was known only as the "Ram Jam House," and thereby hangs a tale, or several tales, most of them untrue. All kinds of wild legends of the house being so crammed with travellers that it was called "Ram Jam," from that circumstance, have been heard. But travellers, as a matter of fact, never stayed there, for the inn never had any accommodation for them. It was more a beer-house than anything else. Its

INTERIOR OF A VILLAGE INN.
(*After Morland.*)

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fame began about 1740, when the landlord was an officer's servant, returned from India. He possessed the secret of compounding a liqueur or spirit which he sold to travellers down the road, this eventually becoming as well-known a delicacy as Cooper Thornhill's "Stilton" cheeses. He called this spirit "Ram Ján," which seems to be an Indian term for a table servant, and sold it in small bottles, either singly, for consumption on the journey, or in cases of half-dozens or dozens. The secret of this liqueur was imparted to his son, but afterwards died out, and it is said that "Ram Jam" ceased to be sold before the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Although the "Ram Jam" was never more than a tavern of a very humble description, and probably never sheltered guests above the rank of cattle-drovers, it is noted as having been the house where Molyneux, the black, slept before his fight with Tom Cribb at Thistleton Gap, three and a half miles away, on September 28, 1811. Cribb, who was easily the victor, had his quarters at the "Blue Bull," another small roadside house, which stood, until the beginning of 1900, at the cross roads on Witham Common, where roads go right and left to Bourn and Melton Mowbray. It has now been demolished.

Here we have passed the little Rutlandshire village of Stretton on the right, which obtained its name of "Street-town" from having been on the ancient road called the Ermine Way. Here we come again into Lincolnshire.

For some twenty miles the Great North Road runs through this broad county, the land of the "yellow-bellies," as Lincolnshire folk are named, from the frogs and eels that inhabit their fens and marshes. North and South Witham, giving a name to Witham Common, lie unseen, off to the left, and the once famous old "Black Bull" stands, as it always has stood, solitary beside the road, out of sight from any other house. It consists of two separate buildings, at right angles to one another and erected at different times.

The original house is a structure of rag-stone, placed a little way back from the road, and facing it. The second building, which bears a more imposing architectural character, and with its handsome elevation of red brick and stone, bears witness to the once extensive business of the "Black Bull," stands facing south, with its gable-end to the road, thus forming two sides of a courtyard. Long ranges of stables extend to the rear. The place is now in use as a farmhouse and hunting-box, and a screen of laurels and other evergreen shrubs is planted on the site of the old coach-drive. Sturtle, who kept the house in the old days, is gathered to his fathers, and the railway whistle sounds across country, where the guards' horns once aroused the echoes of Morkery Woods or Spittle Gorse.

How different the outlook now from the time when Sir Walter Scott made entries in his *Journal*. "Old England," he writes, from his hotel at Grantham, "is no changeling. Things seem much the same. One race of red-nosed innkeepers are gone, and their widows, eldest sons, or head waiters exercise hospitality in their room, with the same bustle and importance. The land, however, is much better ploughed: straight ridges everywhere adopted in place of the old circumflex of twenty years ago. Three horses, however, or even four, are often seen in a plough, yoked one before the other. Ill habits do not go out at once."

A few years later, and these things, which had changed so little, were revolutionised. The railway carried all the traffic and the roads were deserted, the "red-nosed innkeepers" so rarely seeing a guest, that when a stray one arrived they almost fell on his shoulder and wept. Agriculture, too, converted even Witham Common into a succession of fertile fields, and thus banished wayfaring romance to the pages of history or of sensation novels.

The Vane

HOUSE, FORMERLY THE "BLACK BULL," WITHAM COMMON.

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XXIV

Let us rest awhile by this sunlit stretch of road, where the red roofs of distant farmsteads alone hint of life; always excepting the humming telegraph wires whispering messages to Edinburgh and the Far North, or perhaps the summer breeze bringing across country the distant echo of a train. If it does, why then the sound renders our solitude the more complete, and gives flight to a lagging imagination. It reminds us that it was here, and not there, three miles away over the meadows in a railway cutting, that the traffic of two kingdoms went, sixty years ago.

These green selvedges of grass that border the highway so delightfully were not then in existence. They were a part of the road itself, which was, for all that, not too wide for the mail-coaches, the stages, the fly-wagons, private chariots, post-chaises, and especially the runaway couples *en route* for Gretna Green, who travelled along it. "The dullest road in the world, though the most convenient," quoth Sir Walter Scott, in his diary, when journeying to Abbotsford in 1826. Dull scenically, but not historically. Had it been an unlettered cyclist who had made this criticism, a thousand critical lashes had been his portion—and serve him right; but what shall we say of the author of *Waverley?* Dull! why, the road is thronged with company. One can—any one can who has the will to it—call spirits from the vasty deep with which to people the way. No need to ask, "Will they come?" They cannot choose but do so; they are here.

A strange and motley crowd: the pale ghosts of the ages. From Ostorius Scapula and the Emperors Hadrian, Severus, and Constantine the Great, down through the Middle Ages, they come, mostly engaged in cutting one another's throats. York and Lancaster, as their fortunes ebbed or flowed, setting up or taking

down the heads of traitors; obscure murderers despatching equally obscure victims by the way, and in later times—the farcical mingling with the more tragic humours—we see James the First journeying to his throne, confirmed in his good opinion of himself as a second Solomon by a sycophantic crowd of courtiers; Lord Chancellor Littleton, fleeing from Parliament to Charles the First at York, carrying with him that precious symbol of Royal authority, the Great Seal (the third Great Seal of that reign), made in the year the Long Parliament began to sit; Charles the First, a few years later, conducted by the victorious Parliament to London, and, at the interval of another century, the Rebel Lords. "The '45," indeed, made much traffic on this road: the British army going down, with Billy the Butcher at its head, to crush the rebellion, and the prisoners coming up—their last journey, as they knew full well. They were pinioned on the way, for their better custody, and so that Hanoverian heads might sleep the sounder at St. James's. The Hanoverians themselves rarely came this way, nor would their coming have added greatly to the romance of the road. George the Third passed once. He was a stay-at-home king, and of roads knew little, save of those that led from London to Windsor, or to that western *Ultima Thule* of his, Weymouth. Indeed, it is said, on what authority it is difficult to determine, that the third George never voyaged out of the kingdom. Even Hanover, beloved of his forbears, he never knew, although the Jacobites ceased not with their brass tokens, to wish him there.* His furthest journey is said to have been to York.

His son, afterwards George the Fourth, had occasion to remember this road, for he was upset on it in 1789, when returning from a visit to Earl Fitzwilliam at Wentworth Woodhouse. Two miles from Newark, a cart overturned his carriage in a narrow part of the

* Tokens in imitation of the old guineas, which bore on their reverse the George and Dragon device now used on our modern sovereigns. The token represented the king on horseback (the Hanoverian White Horse), with the legend "To Hanover."

highway. It rolled over three times down an incline, and fell to pieces like a box of tricks, but the prince was unhurt.

Of bygone sporting figures with which, in imagination, to people the way we have a crowd. There has always been something in the great length of the road to York, and of its continuation to Edinburgh, that has appealed to sportsmen and all those interested in the speeds of different methods of progression. Pedestrians, horsemen, and coaches—and in recent times cyclists—have competed in their several ways, from an early period until our own day, and the rival railways even have had their races to Edinburgh.

Of these feats, that of Sir Robert Cary, son of Lord Hunsdon, is not the least remarkable. He carried the news of Queen Elizabeth's death to James at Edinburgh, and was the first to hail him King of England. Riding in furious haste, and with fresh horses wherever he could obtain them, he succeeded in covering the distance in the sixty hours between a Thursday morning and a Saturday night. Again, a very few years later—in May 1606—a certain esquire of James the First's, John Lepton of York, undertook for a wager to ride on six consecutive days between that city and London. He started from Aldersgate on the 20th of May, and accomplished his task every day before darkness had fallen: "to the greater praise of his strength in acting than to his discretion in undertaking it," as Fuller remarks. He also, of course, had relays of horses. Among the pedestrians is Ben Jonson, who walked to Scotland, on his visit to Drummond of Hawthornden, starting in June 1618; but he footed it less for sport than from necessity.

When Charles the First was at York, according to Clarendon, it was a frequent occurrence for gentlemen couriers to ride with despatches between that place and London, completing the double journey—400 miles—in thirty-four hours. Thus, a letter sent by the Council in London on the Saturday, midnight, was answered on its arrival at York by the king, and the

answer delivered in London at ten o'clock on the Monday morning.

Then there was Cooper Thornhill, landlord of the "Bell" at Stilton, who for a wager rode to London and back again to Stilton, about 1740. The distance, 154 miles in all, was done in eleven hours thirty-three minutes and forty-six seconds. He had nineteen horses to carry him, and so is no rival of Turpin's mythical exploit in riding to York on his equally mythical Black Bess; but he was evidently considered a wonderful person, for there was a poem published about him in 1745, entitled "The Stilton Hero: O Tempora! O Mores:" a sixpenny quarto of fourteen pages.

Foster Powell is easily first among the pedestrians. He was an eighteenth century notability, a native of Horsforth, near Leeds, and born in 1734. Articled to an attorney, he remained a solicitor's clerk, undistinguished in the law, but early famed for his walking powers. In 1764 he backed himself for any amount to walk fifty miles on the Bath Road in seven hours, and having accomplished this, despite his wearing a heavy greatcoat and leather breeches at the time, he visited France and Switzerland, and fairly walked the natives off their legs. It was in 1773 that he performed his first walk from London to York and back, doing the 400 miles in five days and eighteen hours. This was followed by a walk of 100 miles, out and home, on the Bath Road, done in twenty-three hours and a quarter. His three great pedestrian records on the Great North Road in 1788 and twice in 1792 are his most remarkable achievements. Although by this time he had long passed the age at which athletics are commonly indulged in, he performed the London to York and back walk of 1788 in five days twenty hours, and its repetitions of 1792 in five days eighteen hours and five days fifteen hours and a quarter, respectively. The starting and turning-points were Shoreditch Church and York Minster. This last effort probably cost him his life, for he died,

aged fifty-nine, early the following year. Powell figures—rightly enough—as one of Wilson and Caulfield's company of "Remarkable Characters," in

FOSTER POWELL.

which he is described as about five feet nine inches in height, close-knit body, of a sallow complexion, and of a meagre habit. He lived on a light and spare

diet, and generally abstained from drink, only on one of his expeditions partaking of brandy. He took but little sleep, generally five hours.

Robert Barclay of Ury, born 1731, died 1797, walked from London to Ury, 510 miles, in ten days. He is described as having been well over six feet in height. He married, in 1776, Sarah Ann Allardice, and was the father of the next notable pedestrian.

Captain Barclay of Ury, an eighteenth century stalwart, born in 1779 and living until 1854, walked the whole way from Edinburgh to London and back. He was at the time Member of Parliament for Kincardineshire. Another of his feats of endurance was driving the mail for a wager from London to Aberdeen. He then offered to drive it back for another wager, but Lord Kennedy, who had already lost, was not inclined to renew. Barclay started the "Defiance" coach between Edinburgh and Aberdeen in July 1829. He only once upset it, and thus described the event:—"She fell as easy as if she had fallen on a feather bed, and looking out for a soft place, I alighted comfortably on my feet." A favourite axiom with him was that no man could claim to be a thoroughly qualified coachman until he had "floored" —that is, upset—his coach; "for till he has done so he cannot know how to get it up again." Barclay was the claimant of the Earldom of Monteith and Ayr, and it was a source of genuine anxiety with him whether, in the event of his proving his claim, he would have to give up the reins. He consulted his friend the Duke of Gordon on this point. "Why," replied his Grace, "there is not much difference between an earl and a marquis, and as the Marquis of Waterford drives the Brighton 'Defiance,' I see no reason why you may not drive its Aberdeen namesake. At all events, if there be any objection to your being the coachman, there can be none to your being the guard." Barclay was snubbed!

As for the many great people who were furiously driven back and forth, up and down the road, the

historian is dismayed at the prospect of chronicling their whirling flight. Let us respectfully take the most of their performances on trust. There was no occasion for all this haste, save the spirit of the thing, as Byron hints:—

> "Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
> Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry,
> As going at full speed—no matter where its
> Direction be, so 'tis but in a hurry,
> And merely for the sake of its own merits;
> For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
> The greater is the pleasure in arriving
> At the great *end* of travel—which is driving."

Thus there was Lord Londonderry, who made a speech in the House one night, and the next evening was at his own place in Durham, 250 miles or so away, having travelled down in his "chariot and four."

There were those, however, who scorned these effeminate methods. Like Barclay of Ury, they walked or rode horseback, long after the introduction of coaches. Foul-mouthed old Lord Monboddo, for instance, a once famous Scots Lord of Session, persisted in the use of the saddle. He journeyed between the two capitals once a year, and continued to do so until well past fourscore years of age. On his last journey to London he could get no further than Dunbar, and when his nephew asked him why he gave up, "Eh, George," said he, "I find I am noo auchty-four." He was, in fact, suffering from the incurable disease of "Anno Domini." He held it unmanly "to sit in a box drawn by brutes." Would that we could have his shade for a companion on a 'bus ride from Charing Cross to the Bank!

At that period the stage-wagons performed the journey in fourteen days, carrying passengers at a shilling a day.

XXV

The list of equestrians is long and distinguished. Lord Mansfield rode up from Scotland to London when a boy, on a pony, and took two months over the enterprise. Dr. Skene, who left town in 1753 in the same fashion, reached Edinburgh in nineteen days. His expenses, having sold his mare on arrival for eight guineas—exactly the sum he had given for her—amounted to only four guineas.

This, indeed, was the usual plan—to purchase a horse for the journey and to sell it on arrival; a method so canny that it must surely be of Scots invention. It had the advantage that, if you found a good market for your nag, it was often possible to make a profit on the transaction.

But it behoved the purchaser to make some inquiry as to the previous owners, as no doubt the Scotsman, leaving London with one of these newly bought mounts, discovered, after some embarrassing experiences. He went gaily forth upon his way, and nothing befell him until Finchley Common was reached. On that lonely waste, however, he met another horseman; whereupon his horse began to edge up to the stranger, as though to prevent him from proceeding. The Scotsman was at a loss to understand this behaviour, but the other traveller, thinking him to be a highwayman, was for handing over his purse forthwith. This little difficulty explained away, our friend resumed his journey, presently meeting a coach, when the performance was repeated. This, time, however, blunderbusses were aimed at him, and, the nervous passengers being in no mood to hear or understand explanations, he had a rather narrow escape of his life. At Barnet he sold this embarrassing horse for what he could get, and continued his journey by coach.

It was in 1756 that Mrs. Calderwood of Coltness travelled to London from Edinburgh in her own post-

chaise, her sturdy serving-man, John Rattray, riding beside the vehicle on horseback, armed with pistols and a broadsword by his side. She set out from Edinburgh on the 3rd of June and reached London on the evening of the 10th—an astonishing rapid journey, it was thought. Let it not be supposed that the armed serving-man, or the case of pistols the good dame carried with her inside the vehicle, showed an excess of precaution. Not at all; as was instanced near that suspicious place, Bawtry, in whose neighbourhood a doubtful character whom they took to be a highwayman made his appearance. However, when John Rattray began talking ostentatiously about powder and ball to the post-boy, the supposed malefactor was nonplussed; and on John Rattray furthermore "showing his whanger," the fellow made off. And so Cox—and Box—were satisfied. Strangest of all travellers, however, was Peter Woulfe, chemist, mineralogist, and eccentric, whose specific for illness was a journey by mail-coach. He indulged this whim for years, riding from London to Edinburgh and back, until 1803, when the remedy proved worse than the disease, for he caught cold on these bleak miles and died.

John Scott, afterwards Earl of Eldon and created Lord Chancellor, left a record of his early travels along this road—surely it were better named the Road to Fortune! He left school at Newcastle in 1766 to proceed to London on the way to Oxford, and travelled in a "fly," so called because it did the journey in the previously unheard-of time of three days and four nights. This "fly" had probably once been a private carriage, for it still bore the motto, "*Sat cito, si sat bene*"—that is to say, "Quick enough, if well enough"—exquisitely appropriate, however, to that slow pace. Young Scott had noticed this, and made an impudent remark to a fellow-traveller, a Quaker, who, when they halted at Tuxford, had given sixpence to a chamber-maid, telling her that he had forgotten to give it her when he had slept at

the inn two years before. "Friend," said he to the Quaker, "have you seen the motto on this coach?"

"No," said his companion.

"Then look at it," he rejoined, "for I think giving her sixpence *now* is neither *sat cito* nor *sat bene*."

It is astonishing, indeed, how many future Lord Chancellors came from the North. Lord Chancellor Campbell, who as a boy came up to London from Fife in 1798, was among the early arrivals by mail-coach. At that time his father was the admiration of his Fifeshire village, for he was the only one in the place who had been to London. Every one, accordingly, looked up to, and consulted, so great a traveller. He had seen Garrick, too, and was used to boast of the fact, although, it is to be supposed, with discretion and amid the inner circle of his friends, for play-actors were not yet favourites in the dour Scottish mind. Great was the excitement when young Campbell left home. The speed of the coaches had been accelerated, and they now began to reach London from Edinburgh in two days and three nights. Friends advised him to stay in York and recuperate for a day or two after a taste of this headlong speed, lest he—as it was rumoured had happened to others—should be seized with apoplexy from the rush of air at that rate of travelling. But, greatly daring, he disregarded their advice, and came to town direct and in safety.

When railways were introduced, they meant much more than cheap and speedy travelling; they pre-figured a social revolution and an absolute reversal of manners and customs. The "great ones of the earth" were really great in the old days; to-day no one is great in the old exclusive sense. Every one can go everywhere—and every one does. Dukes travel in omnibuses and go third-class by train because there is no fourth. If there *were*, they would go by it, and save the difference.

The judges kept up the practice of going on circuit in their carriages for some little while after railways had rendered it unnecessary; and barristers who used

to post to the assizes were for a few years unwilling to be convinced that it was quite respectable and professional to go by train. The juniors were the readiest converts, for the difference in cost touched them nearly. The clergy soon embraced the opportunity of travelling cheaply, for the cloth has ever had, at the least of it, a due sense of the value of money.

Dignified and stately prelates therefore speedily began to look ridiculous by contrast, and the old picture in *Punch*, once considered exquisitely humorous, of a bishop carrying a carpet-bag, has lost its point. Samuel Wilberforce, when elevated to the Bishopric of Oxford in 1845, was probably the first Bishop to give up his coach and four and his gorgeous lackeys. He rode, unattended, on horseback, and scandalised those who saw him. How much more scandalised would they have been to see bishops ride bicycles: a sight not uncommon in our time.

In the vanished era, only those who could afford it travelled; in the present, only those who *cannot* afford it go "first." Jack is as good as his master—"and a d——d sight better," as the Radical orator said. Caste, happily, is breaking down, and their privileges are being stripped from the governing cliques who for centuries have battened on the public purse. Perhaps it was because they had a prophetic fore-knowledge of all this that the titled and other landowners so strenuously withstood railways at their beginning. They sometimes opposed railways so successfully that great trunk routes, planned to go as direct as possible between two points, were diverted and made circuitous. When the Great Northern Railway was projected it was proposed to follow the highway to the North as nearly as possible, and to go through Stamford; but the Marquis of Exeter opposed the Bill as far as it concerned his own property, and procured a deviation which sent the main line through Grantham, with the results that Stamford languishes while Grantham is made to flourish, and that the short-

sightedness of the then Marquis has wofully affected the value of his successor's property. If the thing were to do again, how eagerly would the Company be invited to take the route it was once forbidden!

XXVI

We, none of us, who read the story of the roads, or who make holiday along them, would really like those old times back, when railways were undreamt of, and travelling for the pleasure of it was unknown. It is sufficient to read the old travellers' tales, to realise what discouragements from leaving one's own fireside existed then. There was, for instance, toward the close of the seventeenth century, and well on into the eighteenth, an antiquary of repute who lived at Leeds, and journeyed very frequently in the Midlands, Ralph Thoresby was his name. He travelled much, and in all weathers, and knew the Great North Road well. In his day the coaches were often, through the combined badness of the roads and the severity of the weather, obliged to lay up in the winter, like ships in Arctic seas. Like his much more illustrious contemporary, Pepys, he not infrequently lost his way, owing to the roads at that period having no boundary, and once, he tells us, he missed the road between York and Doncaster, fervently thanking God for having found it again. Indeed, all his journeys end with more or less hearty thanksgivings for a safe return. On one occasion we find him missing his pistols at an inn, and darkly suspecting the landlord to be in league with thieves and murderers; but he finds them, after a nerve-shaking search, and proceeds, thanking the Lord for all his mercies. At another time, journeying to London, he passes, and notes the circumstance, "the great common where Sir Ralph Wharton slew the highwayman." This was doubtless Witham Common, but, although he alludes to the

subject as though it were in his time a matter of great notoriety, all details of this encounter are now sadly to seek, and Sir Ralph Wharton himself lives only in Thoresby's diary.

Thoresby was a very inaccurate person. He mentions "Stonegate Hole, between Stamford and Grantham," but he is out of his reckoning by forty miles or so, Ogilby's map of 1697 marking the spot near Sawtry. Accordingly when we find him, going by coach, instead of by his usual method, on horseback, in May 1714, and noting "we dined at Grantham: had the usual solemnity (this being the first time the coach passed in May), the coachman and horses being decked with ribbons and flowers, the town music and young people in couples before us," we shrewdly suspect he was referring to the festivities of this kind held at Sutton-on-Trent, twenty-three miles further north.

Witham Common passed, we come to the village of Colsterworth, built on a rise, with fine views from it of the upland copses and gentle hills and dales of this hunting country, where the Cottesmore, the Atherstone, and the Quorn overrun one another's boundaries. Colsterworth is the last of the stone-built villages for many a mile to come, red brick reigning from Grantham onwards, to far beyond York. It is a narrow-streeted village, with an old church, closely elbowed by houses beside the road; the church where Sir Isaac Newton and his ancestors worshipped, and where, on the wall of the Newton Chapel, may yet be seen one of the sundials he carved with a penknife when only nine years of age. In a secluded nook, nearly two miles to the left of the high-road, lies Woolsthorpe Manor House, the Newtons' ancestral home, now a small farmhouse, with a tablet built into the wall of the room where the philosopher was born. The famous apple-tree whose falling fruit suggested the Law of Gravitation has long since disappeared.

Lincolnshire now begins to thoroughly belie its

GREAT PONTON.

CORPORATION

reputation for flatness, the road descending steeply from Colsterworth and rising sharply from Easton Park to the park of Stoke Rochford, with another long sharp descent beyond, and a further rise of some importance into Great Ponton, another of the very small "Great" villages.

Great Ponton, or Paunton Magna, as it was formerly called, was in early days the site of a Roman camp, and of a turnpike gate in latter times. Both have gone to a common oblivion. If the ascent to the tiny village by the highroad is steep, the climb upwards to it by the country lanes from the lowlands on the east, where the Great Northern Railway takes its easeful course, is positively precipitous. Overlooking the pleasant vale from its commanding eyrie stands the beautiful old church, in a by-way off the main road; the church itself strikingly handsome, but the pinnacled and battlemented tower its peculiar glory. It is distinctly of the ornate Somersetshire type, and a very late example of Perpendicular work. Having been built in 1519, when Gothic had reached its highest development, and Renaissance ideals were slowly but surely obtaining a hold in this country, we find in its lavish ornamentation and abundant panelling an attempt to combine the florid alien Renaissance conventions with that peculiarly insular phase of Gothic, the Perpendicular style. The result is, as it chances, happy in this instance, the new methods halting before that little further development which would have made this a debased example. The building of this tower was the work of Anthony Ellys, merchant of the staple, and of his wife, as a thank-offering for a prosperous career, and of an escape from religious persecution; and his motto, "Thynke and thanke God of all," is still visible, carved on three sides. His house, a crow-stepped old mansion next the church, is still standing, and recalls the legend of his sending home a cask from his warehouses in Calais, labelled "Calais sand." Arriving home, he asked his wife what she had done with the "sand."

She had put it in the cellar. He then revealed the fact that it contained, not sand, but the greater part of his wealth.

GREAT PONTON CHURCH.

Prominent on the south-east pinnacle of this tower is a curious vane in the shape of a fiddle. The legend told of it says that, many years ago, there wandered amid the fenland villages of Lincolnshire a poor fiddler who gained a scanty livelihood by playing at fairs and weddings, and not infrequently in the parlours of the village inns on Saturday nights. After some years of this itinerant minstrelsy, he amassed a sufficient sum of money wherewith to pay his fare

as a steerage passenger to the United States, to which country his relatives had emigrated some time before. In course of time, this once almost poverty stricken fiddler became rich through land speculation in the backwoods; and, revisiting the scenes of his tuneful pilgrimages in the new character of a wealthy man, offered to repair this then dilapidated church, as some sort of recognition of the kindnesses shown him in bygone years. Only one stipulation was made by him, that a vane representing his old fiddle should take the place of the weathercock. This was agreed to, and, as we see, that quaint emblem is there to this day.

Candour, however, compels the admission that this pretty legend has no truth in it; but the story has frequently found its way into print, and so is in a fair way to become a classic. The original fell in 1899 and was broken. The then rector would have replaced it with another vane of different character, but the old folk were attached to their fiddle, and so a replica was made by subscription, and fixed; and there it is to-day: the first fiddle, said the rector, that ever he heard of in the guise of a wind-instrument!

Among the many curious inn-signs along the road, that of the "Blue Horse," at Great Ponton, is surely one of the most singular, and is a zoological curiosity not readily explained.

XXVII

Grantham, one hundred and ten and a quarter miles from London by road, and five miles less by rail, is three miles and a half distant from Great Ponton. Entered down the very long and steep descent of Spitalgate Hill, the utterly modernised character of the town becomes at once apparent, and all pleasurable anticipations based upon memories of the lettered ease of Stamford are instantly dispelled. The expectant traveller comes to Grantham hopeful of a fine old town with streets and buildings befitting its

historic dignity; but these hopes are soon dispelled by grimy engine-shops and roads gritty with coal-dust, giving earnest of an aggressive modernity fully unfolded when the level is reached and the town entered at Spitalgate and St. Peter's Hill. Grantham is a red-brick town, and modern red brick at that. A cruelly vulgar Town Hall, all variegated brick, iron crestings, and general spikiness, fondly believed to be "Italian," testifies at once to the expansive prosperity of Grantham and to its artlessness. This monument of Grantham's pride faces the grass-plots that border the broad thoroughfare of St. Peter's Hill (which is flat, and not a hill at all) where stand bronze statues of Sir Isaac Newton, Grantham's great man, and of a certain Frederick James Tollemache, M.P. for Grantham, who departed this life in 1888, after having probably achieved some kind of local celebrity which, whatever it may have been, has not sent the faintest echo to the outer world. It is an odd effigy, representing the departed legislator in an Inverness cloak, and holding in his right hand a something which looks curiously like a billiard-cue, but is probably intended for some kind of official wand. The untutored might be excused for thinking this a monument to a champion billiard-player.

Great are the Tollemaches in Lincolnshire, great territorially, that is to say; for the Earls of Dysart, at the head of the family, own many manors and broad acres; from Witham and Buckminster, away along the road to Foston and Long Bennington, and so to where the Shire Dyke divides the counties of Lincolnshire and Nottingham, on the marches of the Duke of Newcastle's estates.

To an Earl of Dysart, Grantham owes the ugly polished granite obelisk in the market-place, with a lying inscription which purports to mark the spot where the ancient Eleanor Cross formerly stood, before it was utterly demolished by Puritan fanatics in 1645. That spot was really on St. Peter's Hill, at quite the other end of the town!

Grantham owes its name to the river on which it stands, now the Witham, but once called the Granta, and its ancient prosperity to its position on the road to the North. To this circumstance is due also its long reputation as a town of many and excellent inns, from those early times when the Church was the earliest inn-keeper, to those others when the coaches were at their best and "entertainment for man and beast" a merely secular business. The

THE "ANGEL," GRANTHAM.

"Angel" and the "George" at Grantham have a long history. The "Angel" still survives as a mediæval building, and, like the equally famous "George" at Glastonbury, contrives to please alike the antiquary and the guest whose desire for modern creature comforts takes no account of Gothic architecture. Anciently a wayside house of the Knights Templar, the existing building belongs to the mid-fourteenth

and fifteenth centuries. On either side of its great archway now appear the carved stone heads of Edward the Third and the heroic Queen Philippa, and at the crown of the arch, serving the purpose of a supporting corbel to the beautiful oriel window above, is an angel, supporting a shield of arms; not the old sign, indeed, but an architectural adornment merely. This, and all the numerous "Angels" and the several "Salutations" on the road, derived from the religious picture-sign of the Annunciation, of which the saluting angel in the "Hail Mary" group in course of time alone remained.

Before coaches or carriages were, kings and courtiers on their way north or south made the "Angel" their headquarters, coming to it, of necessity, on horseback. Thus, John held his Court here in the February of 1213, in the building which preceded even this old one, and Richard the Third signed Buckingham's death-warrant in 1483 in the great room, now divided into three, and that once extended the whole length of the frontage on the first floor. Perhaps it was in the bay of this oriel window that he "off'd with his head!" in the familiar phrase mouthed by many generations of gory tragedians and aspiring amateurs; and exclaiming "So much for Buckingham!" turned on his heel, in the attitude of triumphant villainy we know so well. But, unhappily for the truth of this and similar striking situations, it is to be feared that Richard, unappreciative of the situation—the "situation," that is to say, in the theatrical sense—signed the warrant in a businesslike way, and neither mouthed nor struck attitudes. He left that scene to be exploited by Shakespeare or Colley Cibber as authors, and by Charles Kean and many another as actors. Between them, *they* could have shown him how to play the part.

But let us to less dramatic—and safer—times. The "Angel" divided the honours in coaching days with the "George," a house with a history as long, but not so distinguished, as this old haunt of bloody minded monarchs. The old "George," burnt down in 1780, was an equally beautiful house, and was

rebuilt in the prevailing Georgian taste—or want of taste—that raised so many comfortable but ugly inns toward the close of the eighteenth century. "One of the best inns in England," says Dickens, in describing the journey from London to Yorkshire in *Nicholas Nickleby*, and there is not wanting other testimony to its old-time excellence.

"At the sign of the 'George' you had a cleaner cloth, brighter plate, higher polished glass, and a brisker fire, with more prompt attention and civility than at most other places," says one who had occasion to know; and so the local proverb, current among towns and villages adjacent to Grantham, "Grantham gruel; nine grots and a gallon of water," was evidently no reflection upon the quality of this inn. The "George" was busy with the coaches, early and late. First to arrive was the Edinburgh mail, at twenty-three minutes past seven in the morning. Three lengthened blasts of the horn announced its arrival, and out stepped night-capped passengers, half asleep and surly, but fresh water and good spirits dispelled the gloomy faces, and down went, for the allotted period of forty minutes, hot rolls, boiled eggs, and best Bohea; good fare after weary wayfaring, and calculated to make the surliest good-tempered.

Francis, Lord Jeffrey, writing from his hotel (doubtless the "George") at Grantham, when journeying to London in January 1831, is not so enthusiastic on old-time travel as he might have been, considering the high character of Grantham's inns. "Here we are," says he, "on our way to you; toiling up through snow and darkness, with this shattered carcase and this reluctant and half-desponding spirit. You know how I hate early rising; and here have I been for three days, up two hours before the sun, and, blinking by a dull taper, haggling at my inflamed beard before a little pimping inn looking-glass, and abstaining from suicide only from a deep sense of religion and love to my country. To-night it snows and blows, and there is good hope of our being blocked

up at Wytham Corner or Alconbury Hill, or some of these lonely retreats, for a week or so, or fairly stuck in the drift and obliged to wade our way to some such hovel as received poor Lear and his fool in some such season. Oh, dear, dear! But in the meantime we are sipping weak black tea by the side of a tolerable fire, and are in hopes of reaching the liberties of Westminster before dark on Wednesday." He was writing on Monday evening!

At any rate such as he could afford to take his ease and partake of the best. Those who needed pity were the poor folk who had just enough for the journey, and could not afford to stay at expensive inns, waiting until better weather came. But, however much we may read in novels of the charm of winter travelling in the old coaching days, if we turn to contemporary accounts, by the travellers themselves, we shall always find that even those who could afford the best did not like it.

Henry St. George Tucker, afterwards Chairman of the East India Company, travelled from Edinburgh to London in 1816, in the depth of winter. He wrote :—

" Throughout the whole journey, as far as Newcastle, we had a violent storm of snow, rain and sleet; and the cold was more severe than I had felt it before. The coach was not wind-tight at the bottom; and as I was obliged to keep my window open to allow the escape of certain fumes, the produce of whisky, rum, and brandy, I felt the cold so pinching that I should have been glad of fur cap and worsted stockings. To aggravate the evil, I had not a decent companion to converse with. We picked up sundry vagabonds on the road, but there was only one, between Edinburgh and York, who bore the 'slightest appearance of being a gentleman.'" He, however, we learn was " effeminate and affected."

In Mozley's *Reminiscences* we find a horrid story of the endurance practised by a woman travelling by coach from Edinburgh to London. " I once travelled," he says, " to London *vis-à-vis* with a thin, pale, elderly

woman, ill-clad in black, who never once got down, or even moved to shake off the snow that settled on her lap and shoulders. I spoke to the guard about her. He said she had come from Edinburgh and had not moved since changing coaches, which she would have to do once; she feared that if she once got down she would not be able to get up again. She had taken no food of any kind."

There the picture ends, and this tragical figure is lost. Who was she who endured so much? Had she come to London to purchase with her few savings the discharge of an only son who had enlisted in the army? Had she made this awful journey to bid good-bye to a husband condemned to death or transportation? Surely some such story was hers, but we can never know it, and so the gaunt figure, pathetic in its endurance, haunts the memory and the baffled curiosity like an enigma.

Grantham, it is true, has few things more interesting than its inns. This is not the confession of a *bon vivant*, suspicious though it sounds, but is just another way of stating the baldness of Grantham's street. One of these few things is the tall steeple of the parish church, which has a fame rivalling that of some cathedrals miles away. Journeying by road or rail, that lofty spire is seen, even while Grantham itself remains undisclosed. If this were a proper place for it much might be said of the church and spire of St. Wulfran's: how the tower rises to a height of one hundred and forty feet, and the slim crocketed spire to one hundred and forty feet more; being sixth in point of measurement among the famed spires of England. Salisbury is first, with its four hundred and four feet, followed by Norwich, three hundred and fifteen feet, Chichester, and St. Michael's, Coventry, three hundred feet, and Louth, two hundred and ninety-two feet. But generalities must serve our turn here. If the spire is only sixth in point of measurement it is first in date, being earlier than Salisbury's. Sir Gilbert Scott held it to be second only to Salisbury in beauty, but

Scott's reputation in matters of taste had slight foundations, and, beautiful though Grantham's spire is, there are others excelling it. The majesty of

THE "WONDROUS SIGN."

Newark's less lofty spire is greater than this of Grantham, and indeed it may be questioned whether a Decorated spire, comparatively so attenuated and with its purity of outline broken and worried by an endless array of crockets is really more admirable as a thing of beauty, or as a daring and successful exercise in the piling up of fretted stones in so apparently frail a fashion.

We cannot get away from the inns, and even the church is connected with them, the town being annually edified by the so-called "Drunken Sermon" preached at it in the terms of a bequest left in the form of an

annual rent-charge of forty shillings on the "Angel" by one Michael Solomon.

But among the popular curiosities of Grantham, few things are more notable than the unpretending inn at Castlegate known variously as the "Beehive" or the "Living Sign." Immediately in front of the house is a small tree with a beehive fixed in its branches, and a board calling attention to the fact in the lines:

> "Stop, traveller, this wondrous Sign explore,
> And say, when thou hast viewed it o'er and o'er,
> 'GRANTHAM, now two rareties are thine,
> A lofty Steeple and a living Sign.'"

It may fairly be advanced that the suggestion to "explore" an inhabited beehive is an unfortunate choice of a word.

There is (unless it has lately been abolished) another curiosity at Grantham. It is a custom. When the time-expired Mayor vacates his office, what has aptly been called a "striking" ceremony takes place. His robe is stripped off, his chain is removed from his shoulders, and with a small wooden hammer the Town Clerk takes the ex-Chief Magistrate on the head to typify the end of his authority. There is only one possible method more derogatory than this humiliating treatment, but it need not be specified.

XXVIII

In history, Grantham and its immediate neighbourhood are notable as having witnessed the rise of Oliver Cromwell. At the outbreak of hostilities in March 1643, the town was taken and its fortifications demolished by the Royalists, but was retaken shortly afterwards by the Parliamentary troops under a hitherto undistinguished Cornet of Horse, after some fighting at Gonerby. The rise of this cornet is picturesquely described by De Foe. "About this

time," he says, "it was that we began to hear of the name of Oliver Cromwell, who, like a little cloud, rose out of the East, and spread first into the North, until it shed down a flood that overwhelmed the three kingdoms." It was on May 22, 1643, that, with twelve troops, Cromwell defeated at Gonerby twenty-four troops of the opposing forces, and thus commenced this meteorological career.

The ascent of Gonerby Hill, where these events took place, is a part of the journey to the North. It begins at the distance of a mile and a quarter beyond Grantham, shortly before reaching the hundred and twelfth milestone from London. For this part of the world it is a remarkable eminence, but although a long continuous climb, it does not come up to the impressive old descriptions of it, and cannot compare with such hills as Reigate Hill, or with Boughton Hill on the Dover Road. The village of Great Gonerby, a poor, out-at-elbows kind of a place, stands on the crest of the hill, with its great spired church as a landmark, a wide, bare street, a little inn with the curious sign of the "Recruiting Sergeant," and an old posting inn, the "Rutland Arms," its principal features. Passing through the cutting by which the gradient of the northern side of the hill has been eased, a remarkable view is unfolded of that flat region, fertile as a land of promise, the Vale of Belvoir.

We shall hear presently what Sir Walter Scott has to say of Gonerby Hill, but in the meanwhile let us see how the view from it struck another traveller, the Reverend Thomas Twining, an amiable clergyman of Colchester, who in the eighteenth century was in the habit of taking holidays along the roads, mounted on his horse "Poppet," and writing letters to his friends, describing what he saw. He was here in 1776.

"You have a view," says he, "somewhat sublime and striking from its mere extent and suddenness; but it is flat as a pancake. The road is through level, moorish, unpleasant ground from the bottom of that hill to Newark, but, as road, excellent." No

guide-book ever pictured a view so vividly as this description, which may stand unaltered to-day.

Gonerby Hill—"Gunnerby" is the correct pronunciation of the word—is something more to us in these pages than merely a hill. It is a place of literary eminence, whose terrors are enshrined in the pages of Scott and Ainsworth. Jeanie Deans, of all the romantic and historic characters that people this historic and romantic road the most prominent, is especially to be identified with this height. Historic she is because there is a substantial basis of truth in the character of Sir Walter Scott's heroine, and of Effie and many another figure in the *Heart of Midlothian*. They have fictitious names, but some were real persons. Helen Walker, who died in 1791 and was buried in the churchyard of Irongray, near Dumfries, is the prototype of Jeanie. She had in 1737 walked to London and sought a pardon for her sister, Isabella, condemned to death by the ferocious Scots law on a *presumption* of having murdered her child. She actually did (as Scott's heroine is described as having done) seek the Duke of Argyle and through his interest obtain the object of her journey; but Scott is responsible for the embroidery of this simple and affecting story; for he never saw Helen Walker, and she, with Scottish closeness, never described her adventures, being only too anxiously concerned that the story of her sister's shame should be forgotten.

It is a curious and (admirable or not, as one may personally think it) unusual conscience that would hesitate to stretch a point in evidence when to do so would be to save the life of a loved sister; and more strange still to find so unbending a moralist enduring the toils and dangers of a four-hundred miles' tramp with the bare possibility of preserving the life of the sinner in view at the end: but to understand the workings of the Scottish conscience is beyond the mental reach of any one who does not chance to be either a Scot or a Presbyterian.

And here let it be said that the Jeanie Deans of the

novel is by no means so attractive a heroine as Scott wished to make her. There is heroism in her walk from Scotland to London, and we rejoice when she is fortunate enough to obtain a "cast in a wagon," or pity her when she falls in with thieves and murderers at Gonerby Hill foot; but when we find her "conforming to the national (that is to say, the English) extravagance of wearing shoes and stockings for the whole day," we can scarce subdue a snort of contempt at the very superior manner in which she thus yields to the popular prejudice in favour of this extravagance in shoe-leather. Nor is she a particularly lovable figure when she disputes theology with the rector of Willingham, with all the assurance of a Doctor of Divinity and all the narrow-minded bigotry of a Covenanter; coming in these things perilously near the ideal of the perfect prig.

We must here quote the landlord of the "Saracen's Head" at Newark on Gonerby Hill. He spoke of it as though it were some beetling eminence, resembling at the very least a Snowdon or an Helvellyn. He called it a "high mountain," and indeed Scott has in putting this phrase into mine host's mouth made him characteristic of his age.

The year of Jeanie Deans' romantic expedition was 1737, and then, and for long afterwards, travellers and all who had business with the roads magnified hills in this manner. They disliked hills, and so for that matter did most people, for the appreciation of scenery was not yet born. "When I was young," said Wordsworth, many years later, "there were no lakes nor mountains," and it was Thomas Gray, the author of the *Elegy*, who really was the first to discover beauty instead of terror and desolation in them.

Jeanie Deans, on the other hand, was pleased to hear of Gonerby Hill. Not, mark you, that she was educated up to an appreciation of the picturesque. We know, in fact, that she was not, because when she and the Duke of Argyle stood looking down upon the lovely expanse of woods, meads, and waters seen

from Richmond Hill, all she could find to say was that "It's braw feeding for the cows." No, when she learned with pleasure of the "mountain" she was to cross, it was only for association's sake: "I'm glad to hear there's a hill, for baith my sight and my very feet are weary o' sic tracts o' level ground—it looks a' the way between this and York as if a' the land had been trenched and levelled, whilk is very wearisome to my Scotch een. When I lost sight of a muckle blue hill they ca' Ingleboro', I thought I hadna a friend left in this strange land."

"As for the matter of that, young woman," said mine host, "an you be so fond o' hill, I carena an thou couldst carry Gunnerby away with thee in thy lap, for it's a murder to post-horses. But here's to thy journey, and mayst thou win well through it, for thou is a bold and a canny lass."

Gonerby Hill was reputed the steepest bit between London and Edinburgh. It was, at the time when Scott wrote, a great deal steeper than nowadays, now that the road has been cut deeply through it, instead of climbing painfully over the crest. Then also, as he remarks, the open ground at its foot was unenclosed and covered with copses and swampy pools. Also, as Jeanie discovered, there was "bad company" where the "bonny hill lifted its brow to the moon." But surely never did such odd company as Sir Walter has invented lurk in these recesses. The *Heart of Midlothian*, indeed, is a fantastic novel quite unworthy of the Wizard of the North, and its wildly improbable characters and marvellous rencounters are on a par with Harrison Ainsworth at his worst. Syston, two miles away to the right, is, they say, the original of the Willingham village in the novel, and Barkston, close by, is doubtless the "Barkston town-end" where Mother Murdockson was put in the stocks; but the references to them are of the haziest.

It was not inadvisedly that Ainsworth was just mentioned, for Gonerby Hill is named in Turpin's Ride. Ainsworth always resorted to the gibbet when

he wanted to make a point in the gruesome. Accordingly, when Turpin mounts the rise, what does he find but "two scarecrow objects covered with rags and rusty links of chain," depending from "the tree." "Will this be my lot, I wonder?" asks the hero with a shudder. We need only to be slightly acquainted with Ainsworth's methods to know that a melodramatic answer was immediately forthcoming. Springing from the briars and tussocks of rank grass between the foot of the gallows and the road, a gaunt figure exclaimed, "Ay, marry will it!" These "gaunt figures" never failed the novelist; but the plain man wants to know what they were doing on these inclement spots, and by what unfailing instinct they were always there at the precise moment demanded in the interests of fiction.

The descent of Gonerby Hill accomplished, and the level reached, a singularly featureless and flat twelve miles leads into Newark, past Marston cross-roads, where a turnpike gate used to trouble travellers, past Foston, a forlorn village on a knoll, Long Bennington, a larger and still more forlorn village on the flat, and thence, with the graceful spire of Claypole far on the right, over the Shire Dyke, into Nottinghamshire, and through Balderton.

XXIX

The approach to Newark is long and dull, by way of the suburban "London Road" and past the decaying Beaumond Cross, but this leads at length to the great open square of the Market-place, the most striking of all such centres of public resort to be found on the way to the North. Newark-"upon-Trent" is a misnomer, for neither the town nor the castle, which was once the "new work" that gave the place its name, are on that river, but only on a branch of it—the Devon—which falls into the Trent at Crankley

Point, some miles below the town. The "new work" was only new some eight hundred years ago, when Edward the Confessor's castle on the banks of the Devon was built, or when it was rebuilt or enlarged by Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, 1123-47. Bishops and other mighty castle-builders in those times not infrequently built their own prisons when piling up their grim fortresses, and so the Bishop of Lincoln found, when King Stephen seized him and kept him in durance within his own stronghold. A judiciously low diet of bread and water, and confinement in an unhealthy dungeon below the level of the river, soon broke the haughty Churchman's spirit, and he transferred the castle to the Crown.

But Newark Castle has better claims to notice than as the dungeon of one of those old bloody-minded prelates. As the place where King John ended his evil life, we may well look upon its ruined walls with interest. His rebellious barons scattered on his approach in that year of 1216, and England seemed in danger of a long continuance of its troubles under the profligate king. But a surfeit of peaches brought that wicked life to a hasty conclusion, and here, on the banks of the sluggish Devon, one of the worst of English monarchs died. We need not regard peaches with apprehension because John is said to have died of them. We must consider whence they came: from the monks of Swineshead Abbey, where the king had stayed on his journey to Newark. Now, Holy Church had the very best of reasons for hating that monarch, and from hatred to murder was not a far cry in those days. So of peaches King John doubtless died; but of peaches subtly flavoured with poison, there is little doubt.

The castle was again seized by the barons, in the succeeding reign, but they surrendered, after a week's siege, and by the gift of the king, the Bishops of Lincoln received their own again. Under Edward the Sixth it again became the property of the crown, and when James the First "progressed" through

NEWARK CASTLE.

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England to his throne, these walls sheltered him during a week of festivity.

A lawless and discourteous, as well as a weak-minded king, as we shall see. Crowds assembled during the festivities set apart by the corporation, and a fellow was caught in the act of pocket-picking. By order of the king, the unfortunate wretch was strung up, instanter, without the veriest semblance of a trial! There's your lawlessness, and here follows the discourtesy.

There was a certain Dame Eleanor Disney, who, to do honour to this strange kind of king, came, splendidly dressed, with her husband, Sir Henry, to one of the receptions. James's eye lighted upon all this finery, and his frugal mind was shocked. "Wha," he asked, "be that lady wi' a lairdship to her bock?"

But the most stirring of Newark's historic days were yet to come. Newark to the last was loyal to Charles the First. Three times was the town besieged by the Parliament, and never taken. All the inhabitants armed and did excellent service, making sorties and capturing troops of Parliamentary horse; and had not the royal cause failed elsewhere, Newark must have emerged, triumphant, at the end. But at last all that remained were some few outlying garrisons throughout the country. Newark was especially commanded by the king to discontinue a hopeless resistance, and accordingly the town laid down its arms in 1646. It was then that the castle was ruined.

It is a highly picturesque ruin to-day, and lacking nothing in itself of grandeur, only needs a more effective site. As it stands, only slightly elevated above the river and the surrounding levels, this historic castle has not the advantages that belong to fortresses like Ludlow and Harlech, perched on their rocky heights. But it has done its duty and still serves to give a note of dignity to Newark town, as one approaches it by the long straight levels of the road from the north. It looks much the same to-day as when Rowlandson made his sketch of it, with the

coach dashing over the bridge, more than a hundred years ago; the projecting Tudor oriel windows still looking forth upon the sullen tide from the more ancient walls, their crumbling stones scarce more decayed than then. The old wooden bridge, however, that formerly spanned the Devon, was pulled down and rebuilt in 1775.

The great glory of Newark is its beautiful church, with that soaring spire which is visible for miles away, before the town itself is glimpsed. Not so tall as Grantham spire, it is as beautiful in its simpler style, and the church is better placed in the town than that of Grantham. Especially striking is the view across the great market-place, the grey Early English and Decorated spire, with its numerous belfry-lights, and the fine windows and bold arcading of the tower forming a splendidly effective contrast with the seventeenth and eighteenth century red-brick houses facing the square. Newark and Grantham spires are really the products of an old-time rivalry between the two towns. Either town is satisfied that it possesses the best, and so the peace is kept throughout the ages.

A relic of old times is found in the custom at Newark known as "Ringing for Gofer." On six successive Sunday evenings, beginning twelve Sundays before Christmas, the old parish church bells are rung for one hour, complying with the terms of a bequest left by a merchant named Gofer, over two centuries ago. He had on one occasion lost his way at night in Sherwood Forest, then infested by robbers of no very chivalrous instincts, who required, not "your money or your life," but both. Just as he had given up hope, he heard these bells of Newark, and by their sound he made his way to safety. In memory of his deliverance he left a sum of money for this bell-ringing.

The market-square has always been the centre of Newark's life. It is singularly like the great market-square of Nottingham, on a smaller scale, and, like it, is partly surrounded by houses with a colonnaded

piazza. An empty void now, save on the weekly market-day, that occasion finds its broad, cobble-stoned space thickly covered with stalls, while groups of farmers throng the pavements, and with their samples of corn displayed in the palms of their hands sell and buy in immense quantities. In the old times this vast empty square was peopled every day with arriving or departing coaches, and its pavements beset with passengers mounting or alighting, for the celebrated inns of Newark were mostly situated here, and the chief of them are here, even now, on the opposite side from the church, and adjoining one another. Newark is said to have once had no fewer than fifty inns. The classical Town Hall, built in 1773, on the west side of the square, stands on the site of two of them, and many others have been converted to different uses. Here on the south side are the "Clinton Arms," so called in honour of the Duke of Newcastle's family, powerful in these parts; the "Saracen's Head," with a bust of an alleged (but very pallid and mild-looking) Saracen on its frontage; and the "White Hart," most ancient of all these existing hostelries. An inn of this name is spoken of as existing here in 1113. A "Saracen's Head" stood here, certainly as far back as 1341, but unhappily the existing house only dates from 1721. This house is the one mentioned by Sir Walter Scott, who says, "The travellers who have visited Newark more lately will not fail to remember the remarkably civil and gentlemanly manners of the person who now keeps the principal inn there, and may find some amusement in contrasting them with those of his more rough predecessor."

Let us put on record the name of this remarkable person: William Thompson, landlord from 1784 to 1819. His "more rough predecessor" was perhaps the landlord who dispensed such open-handed and free hospitality to Jeanie Deans, when that somewhat priggish young woman stayed there, and on leaving asked for her "lawing."

MARKET-PLACE, NEWARK.

"Thy lawing!" exclaimed that "more rough" person; "Heaven help thee, wench! what ca'st thou that?"

"It is—I was wanting to ken what was to pay."

"Pay? Lord help thee!—why, nought, woman—we hae drawn no liquor but a gill o' beer, and the "Saracen's Head" can spare a mouthful o' meat to a stranger like thee, that cannot speak Christian language."

Alas! whatever your language, the more smooth innkeepers of Newark, in our times, do not do business on this principle.

The "Clinton Arms" has seen many changes of name. It was originally the "Talbot," and as such is mentioned in 1341. At a later date it became the "Kingston Arms." Byron often stayed there, and writes from London in 1807, "The 'Kingston Arms' is my inn." It was also the inn, during the election contest of 1832, of Mr. Gladstone, soliciting for the first time the suffrages of "free and independent" electors, who duly returned him, in the Tory interest. Newark thus gave him an opportunity in Parliament of defending his father as a slave-owner, and of whetting his youthful eloquence to a keen edge in extolling the principle of slave-owning. The Newarkers were long proud of having returned the "statesman" to the House, but history will perhaps deny him that title. It has been denied, and the term of "egotistical politician" found to fit better. He set a fashion in surrender, and his country reaped shame while he lived; but the bitterest harvest-home of his methods has come, after his death, in the red vintage of English blood.

It was when standing for this pocket-borough of the Duke of Newcastle's that Gladstone gave an early and characteristic specimen of his peculiarly Jesuitical ways of thought. He took the mail-coach on a Sunday from Newark for London, and beguiled the tedium of the journey and the Sabbath by discussing the question of Sunday travelling with a Tory companion. Not

NEWARK CASTLE
(*After Rowlandson.*)

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merely did he severely condemn the practice, but he also gave some tracts to his fellow-traveller! He gives the facts himself: it is no outsider's satire. Thus, in one moment of confidence, he reveals not only what he is, but what he will be. He implicitly announces that he is a law unto himself and that those things are permitted to him which in others must be deadly sins. In the very moment of crime he can present an accomplice with a tract, and glow with all the fervour of one helped to save a lost soul.

The "Ram," another old inn, is still standing, opposite the castle, on Beast Market Hill. George Eliot stayed here in September 1868, "seeing some charming quiet landscapes" along the Trent. Quiet, undoubtedly.

Ridge, the printer and bookseller, Byron's first publisher, who issued his *Hours of Idleness*, carried on business in a fine old house still standing at a corner of the square, and the house-door and the brass knocker at which the new-fledged poet knocked exist to-day.

XXX

By Beast Market Hill, past the castle and over the bridge, one leaves Newark for the north. Level crossings of the railways now and again bedevil the way, which is flat so far as the eye can reach—and much farther, and the meadows on either side are intersected by runlets and marshes, the road carried over them by a succession of red-brick bridges. At a distance of one and a half miles, the true Trent is crossed by a wooden bridge, and South Muskham reached, where the level-crossing gates take the place of the old turnpike.

The act of looking backwards at this point is a more pleasing physical exercise than the mental retrospect is ever likely to be, anywhere. Sir Walter

Scott perceived the beauty of the view, for he introduces it in Jeanie Deans' journey south, and says, in a fine passage: "The hundred-armed Trent and the blackened ruins of Newark castle, demolished in the great Civil War, lay before her."

"Hundred-armed" is a good and eloquent figure, although on a prosaic calculation likely to be found an exaggeration. Milton, indeed, writing a hundred and ninety years or so before, gives the Trent but thirty arms, on which, it must be allowed, Sir Walter's computation is a great advance. But here is Milton's version:—

> "Trent, which like some earth-born giant spreads
> His thirty arms along the indented meads."

Even Drayton, in his *Polyolbion*, does not more nearly approach to Sir Walter's computation, in the couplet:—

> "The bounteous Trent, that in herself enseams,
> Both thirty sorts of fish and thirty sundry streams."

Shakespeare rather shirks the calculation, and contents himself with describing it as the "smug and silver Trent." As for mere travellers, who did not happen to be poets or to be engaged in the exploitation of scenery, they regarded this stream merely with apprehension, and they did right so to look upon it, for Trent often overflowed its thirty or hundred arms, as the case might be, and converted the flats for miles around into the semblage of a vast lake. Then, indeed—if at no other time—Newark was "upon" Trent, if not actually "in" it, and all the many other towns and villages, which bear a similarly composite title, were in like case. Doubtless it was on one of these occasions in 1739, before the river was bridged here, that the Newcastle wagon was lost at the ford, when the driver and the horses all perished. Nearly thirty years later, on the 6th of June 1767, the poet Gray, writing from London, before starting on a

journey in these parts, says :—" Pray that the Trent may not intercept us at Newark, for we have had infinite rain here." Nor are floods infrequent, even now, and many a boating-party has voyaged down the Great North Road between Newark and Carlton-upon-Trent.

North and South Muskham lie off the road to the right, and are not remarkable, except perhaps for the fact that a centenarian, in the person of Thomas Seals of Grassthorpe, who died in 1802, age 106, lies in North Muskham churchyard. Cromwell, on the other hand, which now comes in sight, although now a commonplace roadside village of uninteresting, modern, red-brick cottages, with an old, but not remarkable, church, has a place in history. According to Carlyle, " the small parish of Cromwell, or Crumwell (the well of Crum, whatever that may be), not far from the left bank of the Trent, simple worshippers still doing in it some kind of divine service every Sunday," was the original home of the Cromwell family, from which the great Protector sprang. " From this," he adds, " without any ghost to teach us, we can understand that the Cromwell kindred all got their name." But the hero-worshipper will look in vain for anything at Cromwell to connect the place with that family. Not even a tablet in the church ; nothing, in fact, save the name itself survives.

Here is a blacksmith's forge, with the design of a huge horseshoe encompasing the door, and this inscription :—

" F. NAYLOR
Blacksmith
Gentlemen, as you pass by,
Upon this shoe pray cast an eye.
I'll make it wider,
I'll ease the horse and please the rider.
If lame from shoeing, as they often are
You may have them cased with the greatest care."

Hence to Carlton-upon-Trent, Sutton-upon-Trent, Scarthing Moor, and Tuxford is an easy transition of nearly eight miles, with little scenery or history on

the way. An old posting-house, now retired into private life, the level-crossing of Crow Park, and an old roadside inn, the "Nag's Head," beside it are all the objects of interest at Carlton; while Sutton is scarce more than a name, so far as the traveller along the road is concerned.

Weston, a village at a bend and dip of the road, stands by what was once Scarthing Moor, whose famous inn, the "Black Lion," is now, like the old-time festivities of Sutton-on-Trent, only a memory. The farmers and cottagers of Sutton-on-Trent long preserved the spring-time custom of welcoming the coaches, and freely feasting guards, coachmen, and passengers. It was an annual week's merrymaking, and young and old united to keep it up. Coaches were compelled to stop in the village street, and every one was invited to partake of the good things spread out upon a tray covered with a beautiful damask napkin on which were attractively displayed plum-cakes, tartlets, gingerbread, exquisite home-made bread and biscuits, ale, currant and gooseberry wines, cherry-brandy, and sometimes spirits. These in old-fashioned glass jugs, embossed with figures, had a most pleasing effect. As to the contents, they were superlative. Such ale! such currant-wine! such cherry-brandy! Half a dozen damsels, all enchanting young people, neatly clad, rather shy, but courteously importunate plied the passengers.

"Eat and drink you must," says one who partook of these *al fresco* hospitalities. "I tasted all. How could I resist the winning manners of the rusties, with rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes? My poor stomach, not used to such luxuries and extraordinaries at eleven o'clock in the morning, was, however, in fine agitation the remainder of the ride, fifty miles. Neither time nor entreaties can prevent their solicitations: they are issued to reward the men for trifling kindnesses occasionally granted."

"Scarthing Moor" is a name of somewhat terrifying sound: but, as with all the "moors" met with on

the Great North Road, enclosure and cultivation have entirely changed its character, and the "moor" is just a stretch of fields undistinguishable from the surrounding country. It leads presently to the little town of Tuxford-in-the-Clay, approached up a steep rise passing under the bridge of the Lincolnshire and East Coast Railway, and in view of Tuxford's Great Northern Station, away on the right, perched on a windy and uncomfortable-looking ridge. A red rash of recent brick cottages has broken out at the foot of the rise, but Tuxford itself, on the crest of the hill, seems unchanged since coaching days, except that the traffic which then enlivened it has gone. It is a gaunt, lifeless place, in spite of its three railway stations, and stands where the roads cross on the height, and the church, the "Newcastle Arms," another inn which arrogates the title of "The Hotel," and the private houses and shops of the decayed town face a wide open street, and all shiver in company. But Tuxford has seen gorgeous sights in its time. Witness the gay and lengthy cavalcade that "lay" here in the July of 1503, when the Princess Margaret was on her way to her marriage with the king of Scotland. The princess stayed at the "Crown," demolished in 1587 by one of the storms which hill-top Tuxford knows so well, and leaving us the poorer by one ancient hostelry. Not that it would have survived to this day had there been no storm, for the town itself was destroyed by fire at a much later date, in 1702.

The "Newcastle Arms" is one of those old houses built for the reception of many and wealthy travellers in the Augustan age of the road, and is by consequence many sizes too large for present needs, so that a portion of the house is set apart for offices quite unconnected with hotel business. Even the roomy old church away on the other side of the broad road seems on too large a scale for Tuxford, as it is, and the stone effigies of the Longvilliers and the mouldy hatchments of later families hanging on the walls of its bare chapels tell a tale of vanished greatness.

There is a curious and clumsy carving in this church, representing the martyrdom of St. Lawrence. The Saint is shown on his gridiron (which resembles nothing so much as a ladder) and wears a pleased expression, as though he rather liked the process of being grilled, while one tormentor is turning him and another blowing up the fire with a pair of bellows.

After the church, the old red-brick grammar-school, founded by "Carolo Read" in 1669, is the most interesting building in Tuxford. "What God hath built, let no man destroy," says the inscription over the entrance, placed there, no doubt, by the donor with a vivid recollection of the destruction wrought in the Civil War of some twenty years before.

The road leaves Tuxford steeply downhill and facing another hill. Descending this, the villages of East and West Markham are just visible, right and left; West Markham with a hideous church like a Greek temple, its green copper dome conspicuous for a long distance. At the foot of Cleveland Hill, as it is called, is, or *was*, Markham Moor, for it was enclosed in 1810, with the great "Markham Moor Inn," now looking very forlorn and lonely, standing at the fall of the roads, where the turnpike gate used to be, and where the Worksop road goes off to the left, and a battered pillar of grey stone with a now illegible inscription stands. This may or may not be the "Rebel Stone," spoken of in old county histories as standing by the wayside, bearing the inscription, "Here lieth the Body of a Rebel, 1746."

Beyond this, again, is Gamston, a still decaying village, its red-brick houses ruined or empty, the wayside forge closed and the handsome old church on a hillock but sparsely attended; the whole a picture of the failure and neglect which descended upon the roadside villages fifty years ago. Many have found other vocations, but Gamston is not of them.

For some one hundred and fifty years the Great North Road has gone through Tuxford to East Retford

and Barnby Moor; but this is not the original road. That has to be sought, half-deserted, away to the left. There is much romance on that old way, which is one of several derelict branching roads just here. The time seems to be approaching when this original road will be restored, to effect a relief to the heavy traffic through Retford.

We may branch off for the exploration of the old road either at Markham Moor or at Gamston. Either turning will bring us in two and a half miles to Jockey House, now a farmhouse, but once an inn at what were cross-roads. Two of these roads are grass tracks, but the old Great North Road on to Rushy Inn and Barnby Moor is quite good, although very little used.

A substantial stone pillar stands at the corner of the cross-roads opposite the Jockey House, inscribed :—

From
London 142
Miles
and a half
Coach Road
Work/op Mannor
Hou/e
7 Miles 3 qrs
176 ——
The Keys
in the Jockey
House.

The "keys in the Jockey House" means that here was a turnpike-gate with no turnpike keeper. The taking of toll seems to have been conducted from the inn.

In the churchyard of Elkisley, a mile or so distant, there is a tombstone which refers to a tragedy in the Jockey House two hundred years ago. It reads :—

"Here lieth the body of
JOHN BARAGH,
gentleman, who was murdered by
Midford Hendry, officer of the Guards,
on the 24th day of June, 1721.
Age 29 years."

Hendry, it seems, was in command of a company of

Guards travelling south on the Great North Road. They had halted for refreshment at Jockey House, and Hendry got into a violent political discussion in the

JOCKEY HOUSE.

inn with Baragh, who was sitting there, a complete stranger to him. In the course of their high words, Hendry drew his sword and stabbed Baragh to the heart.

XXXI

Retford, on the main road, is over three miles distant from Gamston, past the more cheerful-looking little hamlet of Eaton, and the outlying settlement by the "White House Inn," at the beginning of the long approach to the town.

Retford is a town of varied industries, situated on either bank of the river Idle, and by it divided into East and West Retford. Engineering works, brick

and tile making, and agricultural pursuits combine to render it prosperous, if not progressive, for when Retford built its elaborate Town Hall in 1867 it probably exhausted itself with the effort. In this Square, on a plinth, stands the "Bread Stone," or "Broad Stone," a seventeenth century Plague Stone with a hollow at that time filled with vinegar and water for the immersion of coins passing in the market against infection. The town centres in its Market Square, in which the old Town Hall stood. When that building was pulled down a great amount of additional room was obtained at the cost of a certain picturesqueness, to which quality the town can now scarcely lay claim. The "White Hart," standing at this corner of the Market Square, is the only relic of old coaching days. Its modernised frontage does not give the house credit for the respectable age which it really owns, and it is only when we explore the stableyard, a picturesque and narrow passage, extending from the Market Square to Bridgegate, that we see the old-time importance of the "White Hart." It is perhaps unique in one respect. Nowadays, the old innkeepers are, of course, all dead. In some instances their families carried on the business for a while, but soon afterwards all these old coaching-houses passed into other hands. Even the Percival family, innkeepers and coach-masters for some generations at Wansford and at Greetham, no longer have the "Haycock" or the "Greetham Inn," but the "White Hart" is still in the Dennett family, and has been since 1818, when William Dennett took it over. He reigned here until 1848, and was succeeded by his son, Joseph Dennett, who, dying in 1890, was in his turn followed by Arthur Dennett, the present landlord. An old coaching-house—*the* coaching-house of Retford—it occupied a particularly favourable position on the main and cross-country coach-routes: those of Worksop and Chesterfield on the one hand, and Gainsborough, Market Rasen, and Boston on the other. Besides being in receipt of the local coaching business

between Stamford and Doncaster, Joseph Dennett horsed a stage of the Doncaster and Stamford Amity Coach and the Stamford and Retford Auxiliary Mail, among others.

AN OLD POSTBOY: JOHN BLAGG.

Although overshadowed by the neighbouring "Bell" on Barnby Moor, kept by the mighty George Clark, this house did a good posting business. For one

thing, the story of the "White Hart" as a posting-house does not go back so far as that of the "Bell," for when Clark came to Barnby Moor he found a fine business already developed, but the rise of the "White Hart" into prominence dates only from the coming of the Dennetts. Twelve post-horses and three boys formed its ordinary posting establishment, and among them the name of John Blagg is prominent. He left the "Bell" at an early period and entered the service of the "White Hart" in 1834, remaining for forty-five years, and dying, at the age of seventy-five, in October 1880. The old posting-books of the house still show one of his feats of endurance, the riding post from Retford to York and back in one day, a distance of a hundred and ten miles. When posting became a thing of the past, John Blagg was still in request, and his well-remembered figure, clad in the traditional postboy costume of white breeches, blue jacket, and white beaver hat, was seen almost to the last at weddings and other celebrations when riding postillion was considered indispensable. Here he is, portrayed from the life, a characteristic figure of a vanished era.

There are still some relics of that time at the "White Hart": the old locker belonging to the Boston coach, in which the guard used to secure the valuables intrusted to him; and in the sunny old booking-office looking out upon the Market Square there are even now some old posting-saddles and postboys' whips.

XXXII

Leaving Retford by Bridgegate, the road rises at once to the long five-miles' stretch of Barnby Moor, home of howling winds and whirling snow-wreaths in winter, and equally unprotected from the fierce glare of the midsummer sun. At the further end of this trying place, just past a huddled group of cottages at the bend of the road, stands the famous old

"Blue Bell" inn. But no one was ever heard to talk of this old coaching hostelry as the "Blue Bell." The "Bell," Barnby Moor, was the title by which it was always known.

For the beginning of the well-earned fame of the "Bell" we must go back a long way. Not, indeed, to ancient times, for there was never a mediæval hostel here, but to very old coaching days. Already, in 1776, when the Rev. Thomas Twining was ambling about the country on "Poppet," making picturesque notes, it was a "gentlemanlike, comfortable house," and Sterne knew it well. "I am worn out," says he in one of his letters, "but press on to Barnby Moor to-night." Even the "worn-out" would make an effort, you see, to reach this hospitable roof-tree.

But a greater fame was earned by the "Bell" in its later days, when it was kept by George Clark, at once innkeeper, sportsman, and breeder of race-horses. He was famed for his anecdotal and conversational powers, and when free from gout was reputed "a tough customer over the mahogany," in which testimony we may read, in the manner of that time, a crowning virtue. Something—nay, a great deal—more than the "red-nosed innkeepers" of whom Sir Walter Scott speaks, he was also a landed proprietor, and supplied his extensive establishment from his own farm. Peculiarly the man for this road, and especially for this portion of the road, his personality made the "Bell" inn—the word "hotel" was in those days an abomination and an offence—the especial resort of the sporting fraternity, and racing men generally contrived to make his house their halting-place.

Clark reigned at the "Bell" for forty years, from 1800, dying of gout in 1842, shortly after he had sold the house to a Mr. Inett. His was that famous mare, Lollypop, who gave birth to the yet more famous Sweetmeat. But Clark did not live to learn the quality of that foal, and Sweetmeat was sold at the dispersal of his stable for ten guineas. Three years later, when

he had won the Somersetshire Stakes at Bath, Lord George Bentinck in vain offered four thousand guineas for him, and later in that year, 1845, he won the Doncaster Cup.

Clark was chiefly instrumental in bringing to justice two incendiaries, disciples of "Captain Swing," who had fired a hayrick not far from the "Bell." At that period—the early "thirties"—when the Reform agitation was embittering the relations between the squires and the peasantry, rick-burnings were prevalent all over the country. They went by the name of the "Swing Riots," from the circumstance of the threatening letters and notices received being signed in the name of that entirely pseudonymous or mythical person. One night Clark was roused from his bed with the information that the rioters were at work close at hand. Hastily rising and dressing by the glare of his neighbour's burning ricks, he told off fifty from his numerous staff of postboys and stable helpers to mount and to thoroughly explore the country within a circuit of ten miles, offering a reward of £5 to the one who would discover the miscreants, together with five shillings a head to all who took part in the chase. It was a successful foray; for, before morning dawned, two shivering "rioters" were brought to him. They had been found hiding in a ditch. Matches and other incriminating things were found on them, and, being committed to York Castle, they eventually were awarded fourteen years' transportation.

The old "Bell" is still standing. A hundred and twenty horses for the road were kept here in those old times, but to-day, instead of horses, we have motor-cars.

Soon after railways had driven the coaches off the road, the "Bell" ceased to be an inn. Its circumstances were peculiar. Standing as it did, and still does, away from any town or village, its only trade was with coaching or posting travellers, and when they disappeared altogether there was nothing for it but to close down. And so for sixty years and

more the "Bell" became a private residence, and it would have remained so had not a road-enthusiast taken it and re-opened the old house in 1906 as a hotel for touring motorists. The enthusiast took other hotels on this road. Took so many indeed that his resources as a private person were overstrained, and he went bankrupt. But the "Bell," in this, its second time, flourishes exceedingly.

SCROOBY CHURCH.

From hence the bleak hamlets of Torworth and Ranskill lead to Scrooby, set amidst the heathy vale of the winding Idle, which sends its silver threads in aimless fashion amidst the meadows. Here the road leaves Nottinghamshire and enters Yorkshire. Beside the road at the little rise called Scrooby Top, stands a farmhouse, once the old Scrooby Inn, kept by Thomas Fisher as a kind of half-way house between Bawtry and Barnby Moor, and calculated to intercept the posting business of the "Bell" and of the Bawtry

SCROOBY MANOR HOUSE.

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inns. Competition was keen-edged on the roads in those times.

There seems to have once been a turnpike gate at Scrooby, for a murder was committed there in 1779, when John Spencer, a shepherd, calling up William Geadon, the turnpike man, one July night under the pretence of having some cattle to go through, knocked him down and killed him with a hedge-stake and then went upstairs and murdered the turnpike man's mother. Spencer was hanged at Nottingham, and gibbeted on the scene of his crime. The stump of the gibbet was still visible in 1833.

This is the place whence came the chief among the "Pilgrim Fathers" who at last, in 1620, succeeded in leaving England in the *Mayflower*, for America. Scrooby is the place of origin of that Separatist Church which refused allegiance to the Church of England. Here lived William Brewster, son of the bailiff of Scrooby Manor, once a Palace of the Archbishops of York. In those times the Great North Road wandered, as a lane, down through Scrooby village, and all traffic went this way. William Brewster the elder, bailiff and postmaster, was a government servant who kept relays of horses primarily for the use of State messengers. His salary was "twenty pence a day"; the equivalent of about £300 per annum of our money. Although very definite regulations were laid down by the Board of Posts for the conduct of this service, they were not strictly observed, and a postmaster often traded for himself as well, keeping horses for hire and being an innkeeper as well.

At any rate, the Brewsters were considerable people; and William the elder could afford to send his son to Peterhouse, Cambridge, and later had sufficient influence to secure him service with one of Queen Elizabeth's Secretaries of State in Holland. But the Secretary fell into disgrace, and young William's diplomatic career ended at an early age.

He returned home to Scrooby, where he found employment with his father, and eventually succeeded

him, in 1594, holding the position of postmaster on the twenty-four miles of road between Tuxford and Doncaster for seventeen years.

Let us see, from one surviving record, what kind of business was his, and how prosperous he must have been apart from his official emoluments. One of his guests, as virtually an innkeeper, was Sir Timothy Hutton, in 1605. Sir Timothy paid him, for guide and conveyance to Tuxford, 10s., and for candle, supper and breakfast 7s. 6d. On his return journey he paid 8s. for horses to Doncaster, and a threepenny tip to the ostler.

Meanwhile, Brewster, nourished in that old nest of Archbishops, had imbibed distinctly anti-episcopal ideas, probably in Holland. His activities in founding the Separatist Church led to his resignation of the postmaster's office in 1607. In that old Manor House where he lived assembled others of his ways of thought: the Revd. Mr. Clifton, rector of Babworth, near Retford, William Bradford of Austerfield, John Smyth, and other shining lights and painful and austere persons. William Bradford records how the congrega tion "met ordinarily at William Brewster's house on the Lord's Day; and with great love he entertained them when they came, making provision for them, to his great charge."

They would not attend services at the parish church; an offence then punishable by fine and imprisonment, and thus, persecuted, there was no ultimate course but to leave the country: itself not for some time permitted. "They were," wrote William Bradford, "hunted and persecuted on every side. Some were taken and clapt up in prison, others had their houses beset and watched, night and day, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain to fly and leave their houses and habitations and the means of their livelihood."

The Manor Farm, where these early developments of the Puritan movement took place, and where the Brewsters lived, remains in part, and bears an

explanatory bronze tablet placed there by the Pilgrim Society of Plymouth, Massachusetts. And there, too, near the road, stands Scrooby church, rather dilapidated, with its stone spire, much the same as ever.

Yorkshire, upon which we have now entered, is the largest shire or county in England. In one way it seems almost incredibly large, for it has more acres than there are letters (not words) in the Bible. There

THE STABLES, SCROOBY MANOR HOUSE.

are 3,882,851 acres in Yorkshire, and 3,566,482 letters in the Bible. Yorkshire does not reveal its full beauty to the traveller along this road. Its abbeys and waterfalls, its river-gorges and romantic valleys, belong rather to the by-ways. Picturesqueness and romance spelt discomfort, and the uneventful road was the one the travellers of old preferred. Thus it is that those

who pursue this route to the North, and know nothing else of Yorkshire, might deny this huge county, more than twice the size of Lincolnshire, the next largest, that variety and beauty which, in fact, we know it to possess. For eighty miles the Great North Road goes through Yorkshire with scarce a hill worthy the name, although towards the north the Hambleton Hills, away to the east, give the views from the road a sullen grandeur.

But if the highway and the scenery bordering it are characterless, this is a region of strongly marked character, so far as its inhabitants are concerned. Many wits have been to work on the Yorkshireman's peculiarities. While they all agree to disregard his hospitality and his frank heartiness, they unite to satirise his shrewdness, and his clannish ways. The old Yorkshire toast is famous :—

> "Here's tiv us, all on us, me an' all.
> May we niver want nowt, noan on us,
> Nor me nawther."

And this other :—

> "Our Native County : t'biggest,
> t'bonniest, and t'best."

The character of John Browdie is a very accurate exemplar of the Yorkshire yeoman, and you could not wish to meet a better fellow, but you would rather not have any dealings with the Yorkshireman of popular imagination, whose native wit goes beyond shrewdness and does not halt on the hither side of sharp practice. The Yorkshireman's armorial bearings are wickedly said to be a flea, a fly, and a flitch of bacon ; because a flea will suck any one's blood, like a Yorkshireman ; a fly will drink out of any one's cup, and so will a Yorkshireman ; and a flitch of bacon is no good until it is hung, and no more is a Yorkshireman ! No native of the county can be expected to subscribe to this, but no one ever heard of a Yorkshireman objecting to be called a "tyke."

A "Yorkshire tyke" is a familiar phrase. By it we understand a native of this immense shire to be named. No one knows whence this nickname arose,

or whether it is complimentary or the reverse. To be sure, we call a dog a "tyke," and to describe any one as a dog is not complimentary, unless qualifications are made. Thus, the man who is insulted by being called a dog rather takes it as a compliment to be dubbed a "sad dog" or a "sly dog," and, like Bob Acres, lets you know, with a twinkle of the eye, that on occasion he can be a "devil of a fellow."

By common consent, whatever its origin may have been, "tyke," applied to a Yorkshireman, is taken in the complimentary sense. Indeed, the Yorkshireman's good conceit of himself does not allow him to think that any other sense could possibly be intended. He generally prides himself, like Major Bagstock, on being "sly, devilish sly." That he is so, too, those who have tried to overreach him, either in his native wilds or elsewhere, have generally discovered. "He's a deep 'un," says a character in one of Charles Reade's novels, "but we are Yorkshire too, as the saying is." When tyke meets tyke, then, if ever, comes the tug of war. "That's Yorkshire," is a saying which implies much, as in the story of the ostler from the county who had long been in service at a London inn. "How is it," asked a guest, "that such a clever fellow as you, *and* a Yorkshireman, remains so long without becoming master of the house?" "Measter's Yorkshire too," answered the servant.

It is a sporting—more especially a horsey—county. "Shake a bridle over a Yorkshireman's grave, and he will rise and steal a horse," is a proverb which bears a sort of testimony to the fact.

XXXIII

Yorkshire and Yorkshiremen, their virtues and vices, bring us to Bawtry, where the High Sheriff and those in authority used to welcome kingly and queenly visitors to Yorkshire, or escort them over the border,

on leaving; performing the latter office with the better heart, there can be little doubt, for royal progresses often left a trail of blood and ruin behind them in those "good" old times. Happy Bawtry! for little or no history attaches to the little town, and it lives in the memory only as the home of that saddler who, although famous as a proverb, has come down to us a nameless martyr to the Temperance Cause.

"The saddler of Bawtry was hanged for leaving his ale," runs the Yorkshire saying; one eminently characteristic of this county of stingo and plurality of acres. The history of this particular saddler, or the crime for which he was condemned, are unknown either here or at York, but his end is a terrible warning to all Blue Ribbonites. It was in this wise that the artificer in pigskin lost his life. Led forth to the fatal tree, the procession halted on the way to present the condemned with the customary parting bowl of ale, an institution on the way to the gallows both in York and London. But the saddler would take none of their farewell courtesies, and refused the drink; whereupon the enraged mob strung him up, double quick. A few minutes later a reprieve arrived, and they cut him down; but he was already dead, a melancholy warning to all future generations of non-convivial souls.

Coaching days made Bawtry a busy townlet, for although the coaches and the postmasters generally made a long stage of fourteen miles between Doncaster and Barnby Moor, or else a nine and a half mile stage between Doncaster and Scrooby Top, the by-roads gave a good proportion of business to the "Angel" and the "Crown." The "Crown" is still a prominent feature of Bawtry's now empty street, a street whose width is a revelation of the space once considered necessary and now altogether superfluous; just as the long pillared range of stableyards beyond the old coach archway of the inn itself has now become.

Bawtry to-day is a great emptiness. Four-square red-brick houses of a certain modishness, being indeed

built on the model of town houses, look across the void roadway, with a kind of patronising air, upon the peaked, timbered, or lath-and-plaster gabled cottages that border the opposite side of the street. Much older they are, those old cottages, and more akin to the country. They were built long centuries before the coaching age came, bringing a greater prosperity and consequent expansion to Bawtry, and for a time they were quite put out of countenance by the new-fangled brick houses, with their classic porticoes and brass knockers and impudent red faces. But a period of eighty or ninety years, at the most, saw the beginning and the end of this expansion, and

THE "CROWN," BAWTRY.

this once fashionable air has altered to an aspect of old-world dignity. Both the gabled cottages and these Georgian houses would feel greatly degraded if confronted with examples of the way in which the small country builder runs up his tasteless structures nowadays, but happily Bawtry has nothing of this type to show, and the white stuccoed elevation of the "Crown" alone hints at a later phase in building fashion, typifying the dawn of the nineteenth century

and the course of taste in its earlier years. This white-painted frontage marks the close of Bawtry's busy days. Soon afterwards the place ceased to live a pulsing everyday life of business and activity, and began to merely exist. There are shops here—old bow-windowed, many-paned shops—which have long seen their best days go by. They came into existence under the influence of the beatific Law of Demand and Supply, when all the inns were full of travellers who wanted the thousand and one necessities of civilisation. They did a brave trade in those times, and continued it until the railway snuffed it out in 1842. Since then no one has come to buy, and their stock must contain many curiosities. Probably the stationer has still some of that goffered and perfumed pink notepaper on which the young ladies of sensibility wrote their love-letters in the long-ago, together with a goodly supply of the wafers with which they were sealed; and, doubtless, those who seek could find flint and steel and tinder-boxes elsewhere. Bawtry, in fine, is a monument to the Has Been.

Austerfield, where William Bradford was born in 1580, is a grim and unlovely village to the left of Bawtry. Here yet stands his birthplace, in its time a manor-house, but now occupied as two cottage-dwellings, it is not a romantic-looking relic to be the place of origin of one who became the first Governor of the Pilgrim colony in New England.

There was once a pond beside the road near Bawtry (where is it now, alas!) to which a history belonged, for into it used to drive the villainous postboys of lang syne, who were in the pay of the highwaymen. They would, as though by accident, whip suddenly into it, and when the occupants of the chaise let down the windows and looked out, to see what was the matter, they were confronted with the grinning muzzle of a pistol, and the dread alternative demand for their money or their lives.

Past this dread spot, and over the rise and dip in the road on leaving the town, the galloping stage

is reached, a dead level by the palings of Rossington Park and on to Rossington Bridge, where the toll-gate was, and now is not. The inn too, has, like many another, taken down its sign, and retired into private occupation. Off to the left is Rossington village, and in the churchyard, the grave, for those who like to turn aside to see it, of Charles Bosvile, "King of the Gipsies." Here we are four miles and a half from Doncaster, or, as a Yorkshireman would say, four miles "and a way-bit."

Ask a Yorkshireman how far it is to any place along the road, and he will most likely answer you, so many miles "and a way-bit." This is probably his pronunciation of "wee bit." It is often said that the "way-bit" is generally as long as the rest put together. This expression compares with the Scottish so many miles "and a bittock."

XXXIV

From Rossington Bridge, a long gentle rise, bordered by coppices of hazels and silver birches, leads past Cantley to Tophall, where one of the old road wagons was struck by lightning on the 22nd of May 1800. One of the seven horses drawing the wagon was killed, and four others were stunned; while the great lumbering conveyance and its load of woollen cloths, muslins, cottons, rabbit-down and a piano were almost entirely burnt. The disaster was a long-remembered event for miles round, and one of the Doncaster inns was renamed from it, the "Burning Waggon." This house has long since been renamed the "Ship."

Passing Tophall, and by a bridge over the railway cutting, Doncaster is seen, with its great church-tower, smoking chimney-stalks, and puffing locomotives, map-like, down below, three miles away. Two miles further, past Hawbush, or Lousybush, Green, on which unaristocratically named spot old-

time tramps used to congregate, Doncaster racecourse is reached, on the old Town Moor.

Doncaster, all England over, stands for racing and the St. Leger, just as much as Epsom for the Derby, and racing has been in progress here certainly ever since 1600, and perhaps even before. The renowned St. Leger, which still draws its hundreds of thousands every September, was established in 1778 and named by the Marquis of Rockingham after Lieut.-Colonel Ashby St. Leger. All Yorkshire, and a large proportion of other shires, flocks to witness this classic race, greatly to the benefit of the town, which owns the racecourse and derives the handsome income of some £30,000 per annum from it. Doncaster, indeed, does exceedingly well out of racing, and the Town Council can well afford the £380 annually expended in stakes. But the St. Leger week is a terrible time for quiet folks, for all the brazen-throated blackguards of the Three Kingdoms are then let loose upon the town, and not even this sum of £30,000 in relief of the rates quite repays them for the infliction.

Robert Ridsdale, originally " Boots " at a Doncaster inn, rose to be owner of Merton Hall, about 1830. He was a bookmaker. Betting is a pursuit in which only the bookmakers secure the fortunes.

Dickens, who was here during the St. Leger week in 1857, in company with Wilkie Collins, and stayed at the still extant " Angel," saw this side of horse-racing fully displayed. Looking down into the High Street from their window, the friends saw " a gathering of blackguards from all parts of the racing earth. Every bad face that had ever caught wickedness from an innocent horse had its representation in the streets," and the next day after the great race every chemist's shop in the town was full of penitent bacchanalians of the night before, roaring to the busy dispensers to " Give us soom sal-volatile or soom damned thing o' that soort, in wather—my head's bad ! " Night was made hideous for all who sojourned at the " Angel " by the " groaning phantom " that lay in the doorway

of one of the bedrooms and howled until the morning, like a lost soul; explanation by the landlord in the morning eliciting the fact that the fearsome sounds were caused by a gentleman who had lost £1,500 or £2,000 by backing a "wrong 'un," and had accordingly drank himself into a *delirium tremens*.

Sir William Maxwell of Menreith, who won the St. Leger with Filho da Puta, in 1815, celebrated his success by thrusting his walking-stick through all the pier-glasses at the "Reindeer"; expressing his regret that there were no more to smash, as an adequate relief to his feelings.

Dean Pigou, once vicar of Doncaster, bears later testimony to the character of a large proportion of the race-crowds, and tells amusingly how the contingents of pickpockets who flock here on these occasions disguise themselves as clergymen, a fact well known to the police, and resulting in the arrest of a genuine cleric on one occasion. "You old rascal!" said the constable; "we've been looking for you for a long time."

Doncaster, out of the season, is a singularly quiet and inoffensive town, and looks as innocent as its native butterscotch. Quiet, because the locomotive and carriage-works of the Great Northern Railway are a little way outside: inoffensive, because it is unpretending. At the same time it is just as singularly devoid of interest. Almost its oldest houses are those on Hall Cross Hill, as the traveller passes the elm-avenue by the racecourse and enters the town from the direction of London; and they are scarce older than the days of the Prince Regent. Very like the older part of Brighton, this southern end of Doncaster is the best the town has to show.

Hall Cross—originally called "Hob Cross"—was destroyed in the seventeenth-century troubles. It was a late Norman structure, and is copied in the existing Cross, set up by the Corporation, as an inscription informs the passer-by, in 1793. A weird structure it is, too, consisting of a stone pillar of five

COACH PASSING DONCASTER RACECOURSE.
(*After James Pollard.*)

engaged shafts, reflecting credit on neither the original designer nor the restorers. But there it stands, elevated above the modern road, as evidence of a momentary aberration in favour of restoring antiquity of which the Corporation were guilty, a century or so ago. Doncastrians have purged themselves so thoroughly of that weakness in later years that they have left no other vestige of old times in their streets. The finest example of an old inn belonging to the town was destroyed in the pulling down of the "Old Angel" in 1846, in order to clear a site for the Guildhall. Others are left, but, if old-fashioned, they are scarcely picturesque: the "Angel," "Ram," "Elephant," "Salutation," and "Old George."

In old newspaper files we find Richard Wood, of the "Reindeer" and "Ram" inns, High Street, advertising that his coaches were the best—"the horses keep good time—*no* racing"; from which we conclude that there *had* been some. It was Richard Wood, then the foremost coach-proprietor in Doncaster, who first gave employment to that celebrated painter of horses and coaches, John Frederick Herring, who, although a Londoner born, lived long and worked much at Doncaster. It was in 1814, when in his nineteenth year, that he first came to the town, the love of horses bringing him all the way. Seeing the "Royal Union" starting at eight o'clock in the morning with "Doncaster" displayed in large letters on its panels, on the inspiration of the moment he took a seat, and arrived in time to witness the horse "William" win the St. Leger.

There is a tale of his observing a man clumsily trying to paint a picture of the Duke of Wellington, seated on his charger, for the panel of a coach to be called after that hero of a hundred fights. He had, somehow, managed to worry through the figure of the Duke, and to secure a recognisable likeness of him—because, for this purpose, all that was necessary was the representation of an ascetic face and a large, beak-like nose—but he boggled at the horse. Herring

offered to paint in the horse for him, and did it so well that he earned the thanks of the proprietor, who happened to appear on the scene and commissioned him to paint the insignia of the "Royal Forester," Doncaster and Nottingham coach; a white lion on one door and a reindeer on the other. These he performed with equal credit, and taking a seat beside the proprietor in question, who, with others, mounted for a ride to "prove" the springs and christen the new coach, he at once offered himself as coachman. Mr. Wood, for it was he, was naturally surprised at the idea of a painter driving a coach, but consented to give him a trial the next day on the "Highflyer," and to abide by the decision of the regular driver of that famous drag. The result was favourable, and Herring obtained the box-seat, not of the "Royal Forester," but of the "Nelson," Wakefield and Lincoln coach. He was, after two years, transferred to the Doncaster and Halifax road, and thence promoted to the "Highflyer," painting in his leisure hours many of the signs of Doncaster's old inns. It was when on this road that he attracted the attention of a local gentleman, who obtained him a commission for a picture which laid the foundation of his success.

Nearly all the local signs that Herring painted have disappeared. Some were taken down when he became famous, and added to private collections of pictures; while others were renewed from the effects of time and weather by being painted over by journeyman painters. Some landlords, however, knew the value of these signs well enough. There was, for instance, mine host of the "Doncaster Arms," who, having come from cow-keeping to the inn-keeping business, determined to change the name of the house to the "Brown Cow." He induced Herring to paint the new sign, which immediately attracted attention. According to one story, a gentleman posting north chanced to see it and stopped the postboy while he endeavoured to drive a bargain for the purchase. He offered twice as much as mine host had originally paid; ten times as much,

but without avail. "Not for twenty times," said that licensed victualler; and the connoisseur went without it.

The other version makes the traveller a very important man, travelling with four post-horses, and represents the landlord as being away, and the landlady as the obstinate holder. "I's rare and glad, measter, my husband's not at home," she said, "for p'r'aps he'd ha' let thee hae it; but I wain't; for what it's worth to thee it's worth to me, so gang on."

A list has been preserved of the signs painted by Herring at Doncaster, but they will be sought in vain to-day. They were—

The Labour in Vain . .	Marsh Gate.
The Sloop . . .	Marsh Gate.
The Brown Cow . .	French Gate.
The Stag . . .	The Holmes.
The Coach and Horses .	Scot Lane.
The White Lion . .	St. George Gate.

The "Labour in Vain" represented the fruitless labour of attempting to wash a black man white.

The old sign of the "Salutation," painted by a Dutchman in 1766, was touched up by Herring. Many years ago it was removed, but has now been replaced, and may be seen on the front of the house in Hall Cross. It is much weather-worn, and represents, in dim and uncertain fashion, two clumsy looking old gentlemen in the costume of a hundred and forty years ago, rheumatically saluting one another. The sign of the "Stag," painted on plaster still remains, in a decaying condition.

Herring continued as a coachman for several years, and only left the box in 1830, when he went to reside in London. From that date until his death in 1865 he devoted himself entirely to painting.

Richard Wood, Herring's first employer, was part-proprietor of the "Lord Nelson" coach, among others. Especial mention must be made of this particular

conveyance, because if not the first, it must have been one of the earliest, of the coaches by which passengers were allowed to book through to or from London, and to break their journey where they pleased. To those who could not endure the long agonies of a winter's journey except in small doses, this arrangement must have been a great boon. To this coach belongs the story of a Frenchman, still preserved by Doncaster gossips.

It was in the early part of the century that he wanted to travel from "Doncastare" to London. Inquiring at the booking-office for the best coach, the clerk mentioned the "Lord Nelson."

"Damn your Lord Nelson!" says the Frenchman in a rage. "What others are there?"

The names of the others heaped greater offence upon him, for they were the "Waterloo" and the "Duke of Wellington." So perhaps he posted instead, and saved his national susceptibilities at the expense of his pocket.

Another, and a later, coach-proprietor and innkeeper at Doncaster was Thomas Pye, of the "Angel." He lived to see railways ruin the coaching business, but he kept the "Angel" for years afterwards, and his family after him. The Queen, on her way to Scotland in 1861, slept there one night, and the loyal family promptly added the title of "Royal" to the old house.

Coaching days were doomed at Doncaster in 1859, when the Midland Railway was opened and diverted the traffic; and nine years later, when the Great Northern Railway came, the last coach was withdrawn.

Few think of Doncaster as a centre of spiritual activity. Racing seems to comprehend everything, and to make it, like a famous winner of the St Leger a case of "Eclipse first; the rest nowhere!" Even Doncaster butterscotch is more familiar than Doncaster piety, but the Church is particularly active here, nevertheless. That activity only dates from the appointment of Dr. Vaughan as vicar, in 1859. Before his time religion was very dead, so that, when the

great parish church of St. George was burnt down in 1853, the then vicar, Dr. Sharpe, on seeing the flames burst out, could at first only think of his false teeth, which he had left in the building, and exclaimed in horror-stricken tones, "Good gracious! and I have left my set of teeth in the vestry."

The church was rebuilt by Sir Gilbert Scott. It is a magnificent building, but too palpably Scott, and the details of the carving painfully mechanical. Also, the stone was so badly selected that the crockets and enrichments were long ago found to be decaying, and "restoration" of a building not then fifty years old was found necessary.

Dr. Vaughan was a bitter opponent of horse-racing, and so was not popular with the sporting element; and as Doncaster is, above everything, given over to sport, this meant that his nine years' vicariate was a sojourn in a hostile camp. His predecessors had been more complaisant. Always within living memory the church bells had been rung on the St. Leger day, and generally at the moment the winning horse had passed the post. Dr. Vaughan put an end to this and quietly inaugurated a new era, not by raising a dispute, but by obtaining the keys of the belfry on the first St. Leger day of his incumbency, and, locking the door, going for a walk which kept him out of the town until the evening!

XXXV

Leaving Doncaster and its racing and coaching memories behind, we come out upon the open road again by Frenchgate, past the unprepossessing "Volunteer" inn, in whose yard Mendoza and Humphries brought off their prize-fight in 1790; past Marshgate and over the dirty Don to a parting of the ways. To the left goes the Ferrybridge, Wetherby, and Boroughbridge route to the North; to the right, that by way of Selby and York. Both fall into one

again at Northallerton; both claim to be the true Great North Road; and both were largely travelled, so that we shall have to pay attention to either. In the first instance, we will go *viâ* York, the mail-route in later coaching days, and as flat and uninteresting a road, so far as the cathedral city, as it is possible to imagine. Beginning with the suburban village of Bentley, with its ugly new cottages and handsome new church, it continues, with ruts and loose stones as its chief features, to Askerne, passing through lonely woods and past pools and lakes, with a stray grouse or so, and astonished hares and rabbits, as the sole witnesses of the explorer's progress in these deserted ways. Off to the right-hand, two miles or so away, goes the Great Northern Railway, one of the causes of this solitude, to meet the North Eastern at Shaftholme Junction, where, as the chairman said, many years ago, the Great Northern ends, ingloriously, "in a ploughed field."

Askerne, in a situation of great natural beauty, amidst limestone rocks and lakes, and with the advantage of possessing medicinal springs, has been, like most Yorkshire villages, made hideous by its houses and cottages, inconceivably ugly to those who have not seen what abominable places Yorkshire folk are capable of building and living in. Askerne's fame as what its inhabitants call a "spawing place" has not spread of late, but its old pump-room and its lake are the resorts of York and Doncaster's trippers in summer-time, and those holiday-makers derive just as much health from rowing in pleasure-boats on the lake as did their forefathers, who, a hundred years ago, quaffed its evil-tasting sulphurous waters.

Thus Askerne. Between it and Selby, a distance of thirteen miles, the road and the country around are but parts of a flat, watery, treeless, featureless plain, its negative qualities tempered by the frankly mean and ugly villages on the way, and criss-crossed by railways, sluggish rivers, and unlovely canals. So utterly without interest is the road, that a crude

girder-bridge or a gaunt and forbidding flour-mill remain vividly impressed upon the mental retina for lack of any other outstanding objects.

Nearing Selby, the octagonal Perpendicular lantern and spire of Brayton church, curiously imposed upon a Norman tower, attracts attention as much by the relief they give from the deadly dulness just encountered as for their own sake; although they are beautiful and interesting, the lantern having been designed to hold a cresset beacon by which the

BRAYTON CHURCH.

travellers of the Middle Ages were guided at night across the perilous waste; the spire serving the same office by day. Here, too, the isolated hills of Brayton Burf and Hambleton Hough, three miles away, show prominently, less by reason of their height, which is inconsiderable, than on account of the surrounding levels, which give importance to the slightest rise.

Brayton, which, apart from its beautiful church, is about as miserable a hole as it is possible to find in all Yorkshire (and that is saying a good deal), is a kind of outpost between Selby and these wilds, standing a mile and a half in advance of the town.

In that mile and a half the builders are busy erecting a flagrant suburb, so that the traveller presses on curious to witness the prosperity of Selby itself, arguable from these signs. Even without them, Selby is approached with expectancy, for its abbey is famous, and abbeys imply picturesque towns.

From this point of view Selby is distinctly disappointing. The glorious Abbey, now the parish church, is all, and more than, one expects, and the superlatively cobble-stoned Market-place, painful to walk in, is picturesque to look at; but the rest is an effect of meanness. Mean old houses of no great age; mean new ones; mean and threadbare waterside industries; second-hand clothes-shops, coal-grit, muddy waters and foreshores of the slimy Ouse, shabby rope-walks, and dirty alleys: these are Selby.

You forget all this before that beautiful Abbey, whose imposing west front faces the Market-place, and whose great length is revealed only by degrees. Alike in size and beauty, it shows itself in a long crescendo to the admiring amateur of architecture, who proceeds from the combined loveliness of the Norman, Early English, and Perpendicular west front, to the entrance by the grand Transitional Norman-Early English north porch, thence to the solemn majesty of the purely Norman nave, ending with the light and graceful Decorated choir and Lady Chapel. The upper stage of the tower fell in 1690, and destroyed the south transept.

A very destructive fire occurred in October 1906, and opportunity was afterwards taken of doing a good deal of general restoration.

Before leaving the town of Selby, let us look at the commonplace little square called Church Hill. A spirit-level might reveal it to be an eminence of twelve inches or so above the common level of Selby, but to the evidence of eyes or feet it is in no way distinguished from its neighbouring streets. Yet it must have presented the appearance of a hillock when the original founder of the Abbey came here in 1068, voyaging up

MARKET PLACE, SELBY.

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the Ouse and landing at this first likely place on it[s] then lovely banks. This founder was a certain Benedict, a monk of Auxerre, who, having one of those convenient dreams which came to the pious ones of that time when they wanted to steal something, made off with the Holy Finger of St. Germanus; rather appropriate spoil, by the way, for the light-fingered Benedict. Arriving in England, he met an Englishman who gave him a golden reliquary. With this, he took ship from Lyme Regis and sailed to the Humber and the Ouse; landing, as we have seen, here, and planting a cross on the river bank, where he erected a hut for himself under an oak-tree. A few days later, Hugh the Norman sheriff of Yorkshire, came up the Ouse by chance, and not, as might be supposed, to arrest Benedict on a charge of petty larceny. He was impressed by the devoutness of the holy man, and sent workmen to build the original wooden place of worship at Selby, on the spot now known as Church Hill, not a stone's throw from the existing Abbey.

Centuries passed. The first building was swept away, and even the cemetery which afterwards occupied the site was forgotten and built over, becoming a square of houses, among which was the "Crown" inn. From 1798 until 1876, when it was rebuilt, the old "Crown" kept an odd secret. To understand this, we must go back to 1798, when the neighbourhood of Selby acquired an ill name for highway robberies. Among other outrages, a mailbag was stolen from the York postboy, on the evening of February 22 in that year. The Postmaster of York reported the affair to the Postmaster-General in the following terms:—

"Sir,

"I am sorry to acquaint you that the postboy coming from Selby to this city was robbed of his mail between six and seven o'clock this evening. About three miles this side Selby he was accosted by a man on foot with a gun in his hand, who asked him if he was the postboy, and at the same time seizing hold of the bridle. Without waiting for any answer, he told the boy he must immediately

unstrap the mail and give it to him, pointing the muzzle of the gun at him whilst he did it. When he had given up the mail, the boy begged he would not hurt him, to which the man replied, "He need not be afraid," and at the same time pulled the bridle from the horse's head. The horse immediately galloped off with the boy, who had never dismounted. He was a stout man, dressed in a dark jacket, and had the appearance of a heckler. The boy was too much frightened to make any other remark upon his person, and says he was totally unknown to him.

"The mail contained bags for Howden and London, Howden and York, and Selby and York. I have informed the surveyors of the robbery, and have forwarded handbills this night, to be distributed in the country, and will take care to insert it in the first paper published here. Waiting your further instructions,—I remain, with respect, Sir,

"Your Obliged and Obedient Humble Servant,

"THOS. OLDFIELD."

A reward of two hundred pounds was offered for the discovery of the highwayman, but without effect, and the matter was forgotten in the dusty archives of the G.P.O., until it was brought to notice again by the singular discovery of one of the stolen bags in the roof of the "Crown" when being demolished in 1876. Stuffed in between the rafters and the tiles, the workmen came upon a worn and rotten coat, a "sou'wester" hat, and a mail-bag marked "Selby." Thus, nearly eighty years after the affair, and when every one concerned in it must long since have been no more, this incriminating evidence came to light. The Postmaster-General of that time claimed the bag, and it was, after some dispute about the ownership, handed over to him, and is now in the Post Office Museum.

A number of skeletons were discovered in digging foundations for the new inn, and it was darkly conjectured that the old house had had its gruesome secrets, dating from the times when inns were not infrequently the nests of murderers; until local antiquaries pointing out that the name of the place was Church Hill, and that this was an ancient grave-

yard, the excitement ceased. This view was borne out by the fact that in many cases the bodies had been enclosed in rude coffins, made of hollowed tree-trunks; and it was rightly said that murderers would not have buried their victims with so much consideration.

XXXVI

To leave Selby for York, one must needs cross the Ouse bridge, one of those few places where tolls still survive. Foot-passengers and cyclists are on an equality, paying a halfpenny each.

Level-crossings again have their wicked will of the road, and are indeed its principal features, through Barlby and Riccall. We need some modern Rebeccaites for the abolition of these unpaid-for easements granted to the Railway Companies by an indulgent legislature, composed largely of Railway Directors, for the mingled danger and waste of public time caused by level-crossings over public roads constitute a scandal urgently in need of being removed. Yorkshire people might be recommended to see to it, as their forefathers saw to the abolition of turnpikes, collecting in armed and disguised bands and wrecking and burning the obnoxious gates for great distances. In May 1753 they assembled at Selby at the summons of the public crier's bell, and proceeded at midnight to demolish all the gates in that neighbourhood. The military were called out to quell these Hampdens. They did not succeed in saving the gates, but shot and captured a number of the "rioters," who were sent for trial to York Castle.

Riccall, near the confluence of the Ouse and the Derwent, looks an unlikely seaport in these times, now that those rivers and the confluent Foss, a mile or so nearer York, flow soberly in their channels and cease from spreading over the land. Eight hundred years ago, however, things were very different—as

indeed they well might be in that tremendous space of time. So different, in fact, that when the invasion of the North, under Tostig and Harald Hardrada, took place in 1066, before that greater invasion in the South by William "the Conqueror," whose success has overshadowed these operations, the invaders' fleet sailed up the Humber and the Ouse and blockaded the waterways by anchoring at Riccall. From this base they advanced, defeating Earl Morcar at the battle of Fulford, and seized York: retiring on the approach of English Harold to what the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle calls "Staenfordesbrycge," on the Derwent, east of the city. In this we find the original spelling of Stamford Bridge, where the great battle which ended in the utter defeat of the invaders was fought and their leaders, Tostig and the gigantic Norwegian king, both slain. A fortnight later, and the Duke of Normandy had landed at Pevensey, the battle of Hastings had been lost and won, and the victor of Stamford Bridge himself lay dead.

Riccall, and the country between it and York, should therefore be interesting, as the scene of the earlier of these invasions. Aside from the village flows the Ouse, deep in its channel and navigable for barges, than which the Norwegian ships were not much larger; but it could not in these days harbour a fleet, even of these primitive transports. The village itself bears nothing on its face telling of great events, and is of a placid dulness, a character shared by Escrick and Deighton, on the way to York; the road itself gradually becoming an abomination of desolate fields until the village of Gate Fulford is reached. The Great North Road is a businesslike highway. It goes as direct as may be to its destination, and gets there quite regardless of scenery or interest to right or left. Thus, although Escrick Park is reputed to be a demesne of great beauty, and the village of Naburn, lying hidden off the road, is a typical old English village actually boasting a maypole, all the traveller along the road perceives is an unromantic vista of cabbage-fields and other

necessary but uninspiring domestic vegetables, through a haze of a particularly beastly kind of black dust peculiar to the last few miles of the way into York. Fulford itself is no fit herald of a cathedral city. A wide street, the terminus of a tramway, a mile-long row of cottages, a would-be Gothic church; here you have it. Before you, by degrees, York unfolds itself, past the military barracks and nondescript, but always disappointing, streets, until, emerging from Fishergate, the ancient city, free from suburban excrescences, opens out, with the grim castle in front, and the Ouse and Skeldergate Bridge to the left. The so-called "London Road" lies away beyond the Ouse, its name referring to the Doncaster, Ferrybridge, Sherburn, and Tadcaster route taken by some of the old-time coaches. By that route York is most romantically entered, across Knavesmire, where York's martyrs, felons, and traitors were done to death in the old days, and where the racecourse now runs; coming to the walled city through Micklegate, the finest of all the mediæval defensible gateways which are York's especial glory. By the Selby route, through Gate Fulford and along Fishergate, we seem to slink in by the back door; through Micklegate we follow in the steps of those who have marched with armed hosts at their heels, and have entered with the unquestioned right of conquerors. Thus came the young Duke of York at the head of his victorious army, after the crowning victory of Towton; the first thing to meet his gaze his father's head, fixed on the topmost turret, and crowned in mockery with a paper crown by the fierce Lancastrians under whose swords he had fallen at the battle of Wakefield, three months before. Filial piety could not in those times rest content with removing the head from its shameful eminence, and so the Duke caused the Earl of Devon and three others among his prisoners to be immediately beheaded and their heads to be placed there instead. Of such, and still more sanguinary, incidents is the ancient city of York composed.

MICKLEGATE BAR.
(From an old Print.)

Micklegate, like the other "bars" of York, had its barbican, and equally with them, lost that martial outwork at the dawning of the nineteenth century. Its appearance then and now may with advantage

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MICKLEGATE BAR: PRESENT DAY.

be compared in the old print and the modern drawing, reproduced here, which also serve to show the difference between the road-surface of these times and of a century ago.

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